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Security Council

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Letter dated 31 August 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), in which the Committee presents its position on the recommendations contained in the sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004) (see S/2015/648), which was submitted pursuant to paragraph (a) of the annex to resolution 2160 (2014).

I should be grateful if the attached report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Gerard **van Bohemen**
Chair
Security Council Committee established
pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)

15-15252 (E) 100915

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Recommendations contained in the sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team: position of the Committee

1. On 1 June 2015, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted its sixth report to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) (S/2015/648). The Committee is of the opinion that all Member States should be made aware of the Monitoring Team's recommendations and the position of the Committee on them. The paragraphs indicated in the present document refer to the recommendation paragraphs in the sixth report of the Monitoring Team.

Implementation of sanctions — Travel ban

2. In paragraph 36, the Monitoring Team recommended that the Committee annually inform all Member States which Special Notices had been updated [with additional information, including biometric data] in the preceding year, starting from July 2015. The Committee will act accordingly and will annually inform Member States, starting from July 2015.

Implementation of sanctions — Assets freeze

3. In paragraph 47, the Monitoring Team recommended that the Committee include a list compiled by Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of all licensed mining operations in the country, in the forthcoming communication with all Member States on illegal mining, in order to raise awareness and to enable private sector stakeholders to strengthen their due diligence processes. The Committee was not able to agree on this particular recommendation and so no further action will be taken.

Work of the Monitoring Team

4. In paragraph 56, the Monitoring Team recommended that the Committee invite the command of Combined Maritime Taskforce 150 to brief the Committee, with particular reference to their actions against Afghan narcotics, as that should inform the Committee's understanding of indirect financing sources for the Taliban and selected listed individuals and entities. The Committee will invite the command of Combined Maritime Taskforce 150, as well as relevant representatives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, to brief the Committee, with particular reference to their actions against Afghan narcotics.

United Nations A/70/354–S/2015/677

General Assembly
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General Assembly
Seventieth session
Items 37 and 38 of the provisional agenda*

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Seventieth year

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/23. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2014 through August 2015.

* A/70/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/23.

2. On 1 July 2015, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

> "I have the honour to refer to resolution 69/23, which the General Assembly adopted on 25 November 2014, at its sixty-ninth session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine'.
>
> "Paragraph 24 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.
>
> "In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2015.
>
> "Recalling the Secretariat's obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/214, I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words."

3. As at 1 September, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 14 May 2015 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2015, replies had been received from Israel and the State of Palestine.

5. The note verbale dated 27 July 2015 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

> "The resolution 'Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine' constitutes a longstanding contribution by the General Assembly towards justly, comprehensively and peacefully resolving the question of Palestine based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The resolution continues to receive overwhelming support, reaffirming the global consensus calling for Israel's complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem; achievement of the two-State solution of an independent, sovereign, contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders; and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III).
>
> "This consensus reflects the long-held position of the Palestinian people and leadership, since formal acceptance of the two-State solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. This significant compromise to establish the State of Palestine on only 22 per cent of our

historic homeland for the sake of restoring our rights, achieving our self-determination and freedom and ending the conflict is among the boldest confirmations of Palestine's commitment to peace. Remarkably, this commitment has prevailed, despite the historic injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people since the adoption of partition resolution 181 (II) in 1947 and the tragedy of Al-Nakba of 1948, from which our people continue to suffer to this day, particularly the Palestine refugees.

"Here, we underscore the gravity of the plight of the Palestine refugees, who constitute the largest, most protracted refugee problem in the world (5.3 million people) and are enduring immense hardships, which intensified this past year, despite the humanitarian assistance and protection continuously provided to them by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) since it began operations 65 years ago. This is due to the impact of Israel's illegal practices in Occupied Palestine, including, inter alia, the military aggressions and humanitarian crisis inflicted on the Gaza Strip, the latest in July-August 2014; the inhumane blockade of Gaza since 2007; and settlement activities and forced displacement of Palestinians, including refugees and particularly Bedouins, in the West Bank. The refugees' situation has also degenerated due to regional instability, foremost the Syrian conflict, which has inflicted death, destruction and displacement on Palestine refugees, along with Syrian civilians suffering so gravely, and also affected Palestine refugee communities in Lebanon and Jordan, where many refugees have fled. It has also been affected by UNRWA's unprecedented financial shortfalls, which if unmet threaten the Agency's vital services, including schooling for 500,000 children, and its stabilizing role at this precarious time.

"The urgency of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all aspects and of intensifying efforts towards that end is reaffirmed from the outset of the operational paragraphs of resolution 69/23. As reflected in the support for resolution 69/23, the grave impact of this conflict and unsustainability of the situation and, inversely, the manifold benefits peace would bring for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, the Middle East region and the international community as a whole are facts widely recognized and propelling the collective calls and efforts for peace. However, 2014-2015 witnessed a deepening of the political impasse with a breakdown of American-led peace talks in April 2014 due to Israel's suspension of negotiations, followed by its criminal war against Gaza, exacerbating the fragile situation and casting further doubt on its intentions and commitment to peace and the two-State solution.

"The year also witnessed continued failure of the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations to redress the crisis, salvage the two-State solution and contribute to attainment of peace. This was most notably reflected in the failure of the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution (S/2014/916) presented for a vote on 30 December 2014 by Jordan, which called, inter alia, for achievement of a peaceful solution that brings an end to the Israeli occupation since 1967 and fulfils the vision of two States within a timeframe of no later than 12 months from the resolution's adoption. As of this note's writing, the Council has failed to heed

the calls to uphold its responsibilities vis-à-vis the search for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and efforts in this regard continue to be obstructed or delayed, including the initiative led by France to reaffirm the parameters for peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and establish a timeframe to end the Israeli occupation as well as international monitoring and support for implementation of a peace agreement.

"Nevertheless, we continue calling on the Council to uphold its Charter mandate and adopt a resolution aimed at breaking the political impasse and accelerating realization of peace and security and continue cooperating with all efforts for this objective. The provisions of resolution 69/23 are fully respected by the Palestinian Government, which actively strives to implement the resolution and the other relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions in its actions, bilaterally, multilaterally or internally. This is pursued despite the enormous challenges arising from Israel's 48-year military occupation. We also recognize the necessity of Palestinian unity in this regard and continue efforts to achieve reconciliation and empower the national consensus Government to fulfil its duties, despite the cynical Israeli attempts to thwart unity and entrench the divide.

"Indeed, the State of Palestine has always respected its legal obligations and commitments in accordance with United Nations resolutions. We maintain that respect of the law is the key to resolving the conflict and this has been clearly reaffirmed by Palestine's recent accessions to the core international humanitarian law and human rights law treaties without reservations, as well as to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and its exercise of its rights as well as upholding of obligations in this regard. These accessions — broadly welcomed by the international community — also underscore Palestine's intention to use all peaceful, political, legal and non-violent tools to achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

"Only international law can ensure that negotiations to resolve the final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — actually result in a just, sustainable peace. The passage of decades has certified that neither justice nor peace can be achieved by military might and illegal actions and that a people can never be coerced to forgo their rights, regardless of the suffering and indignities forced upon them. Unfortunately, however, the impunity that Israel, the occupying Power, has for too long been permitted, never being held accountable for its violations and war crimes, is prolonging the conflict, undermining peace efforts and obstructing achievement of a peaceful settlement to the detriment of our people, the Middle East region and the global community.

"In the past year, Israel has persisted with its illegal policies and practices, provocations and incitement, which it never ceased from the onset of the occupation nearly a half century ago through all stages of the peace process — from the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference to the last incarnation of negotiations held under the auspices of United States Secretary of State John Kerry with the support of the other Quartet members of the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, the League of Arab States

Ministerial Committee, and concerned States from around the world — and thereafter.

"Israel's violations include, inter alia, continuation of its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, involving land confiscation, construction of settlements, the annexation wall, Israeli-only by-pass roads and other related infrastructure and the transfer of more Israeli settlers, as well as its military campaign against the Palestinian people, including the 2014 war on Gaza and daily military raids in the West Bank, causing death and injury to Palestinian civilians; destruction of Palestinian homes and property; forced displacement of Palestinians, particularly Bedouin families; exploitation of natural resources, including water; daily arrest raids, resulting in imprisonment and administrative detention of over 6,000 Palestinians, who are enduring inhumane conditions, abuse and torture at the hands of the occupier; policies aiding and abetting settler terror and violence against Palestinian civilians and destruction of property, including agricultural lands and Muslim and Christian holy sites; the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip in collective punishment of the 1.8 million Palestinians there and strangulation of the economy and innumerable other measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian people, all in breach of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, relevant United Nations resolutions and the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and in violation of provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

"In this regard, we must recall the grave impact of the Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip, where the occupying forces slaughtered and injured thousands of Palestinian children, women and men, caused wanton destruction, and terrorized and traumatized the entire population. The disastrous impact of this Israeli onslaught on the defenseless Palestinian civilian population in Gaza has been corroborated by several United Nations reports, including of the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry and the Secretary-General's Board of Inquiry and in the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict, in which Israel was wrongly omitted from the list of grave violators of children's rights. In fact, the Commission of Inquiry found that Israel persisted with its onslaught even after early knowledge of the high casualty figures, indicating a deliberate decision on the part of Israeli officials to inflict such harm, a fact also confirmed by the testimonies of Israeli soldiers, who were instructed to kill anyone they encountered in Gaza.

"By the time of the 26 August 2014 ceasefire, the Israeli occupying forces had killed 2,251 Palestinians, the majority civilians, including 551 children and 299 women, and injured over 11,000 Palestinians, including 3,540 women and 3,436 children, with injuries so severe due to the lethal weaponry and wide-impact explosives used that 10 per cent of the injured will suffer life-long disabilities. A total of 142 families suffered the killing of three or more family members in Israeli attacks and 89 entire families were killed. Eleven UNRWA staff were also killed, along with twenty-three health workers. Civilian casualties continue to be caused by thousands of unexploded Israeli ordnance remaining in Gaza.

"The physical destruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces included destruction and severe damage caused to thousands of homes, schools, businesses, hospitals, United Nations facilities, and civilian infrastructure. At the conflict's height, over 500,000 people were displaced, the majority sheltering in 90 UNRWA schools, where they sought protection under the United Nations flag, yet where 42 people were killed, including 16 children, in Israeli strikes on the schools. In total, 12,620 homes were totally destroyed by the occupying forces, 6,455 were severely damaged beyond habitation and over 80,000 were damaged. A year later, not a single destroyed home has been rebuilt due to Israel's blockade and restrictions, with less than 1 per cent of needed construction materials entering Gaza and donor funding for reconstruction insufficient despite generous pledges made at the Cairo Conference. Over 110,000 people remain homeless, the majority Palestine refugees, forced to shelter with host families, in temporary housing or in the ruins of their homes.

"More than 100 United Nations facilities were damaged, 75 hospitals and clinics were damaged and 543 schools were damaged or destroyed, the highest recorded number in the world in 2014. Gaza's sole power plant was targeted by Israeli strikes, causing persisting blackouts of 12 to 16 hours a day. Sixty-three water facilities were damaged and twenty-three were destroyed, worsening the water crisis in an area where 90 per cent of water is unfit for human consumption. In total, 33,000 meters of water and waste networks and 27 per cent of pumping stations were damaged. In addition, 500 economic and industrial facilities, constituting 60 per cent of Gaza's production capacity, were destroyed, affecting more than 35,000 jobs, deepening poverty, in addition to livelihoods lost due to the blockade and 2008-2009 Israeli aggression. Unemployment in Gaza now stands above 43 per cent, with youth unemployment at an alarming 60 per cent. Food insecurity is rampant, with 80 per cent of the population aid-dependent.

"Compounding the human insecurity and despair caused by this Israeli aggression is the humanitarian crisis arising from Israel's illegal eight-year blockade of Gaza. This humanitarian crisis has negatively impacted every single aspect of life, with short- and long-term socioeconomic implications that are depriving and disfiguring Palestinian society. As recognized globally, this unjust situation is unsustainable and volatile, requiring immediate remedy to avert further deterioration and explosion of another cycle of violence.

"One year on, the human and physical wounds remain unhealed in Gaza and hopes are fading for any relief from this appalling injustice and restoration of the rights and dignity of our people. This deplorable situation, coupled with relentless Israeli settlement activities throughout the rest of Occupied Palestine, repression of Palestinian civilians and incitement by Israeli government, military and religious leaders and extremist settlers, particularly regarding Occupied East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, has severely aggravated conditions on the ground, entrenched the political impasse and pushed us farther away from our goal of peace. Clearly, the moment that Israel launched its 2014 offensive, and considering the illegal actions perpetrated since and the declarations by Israeli leaders — including the provocative, anti-two-State remarks by the Prime Minister during the 2015 elections — it aimed to destroy the prospects for peace, intensify its

oppression of the Palestinian people and strip them of hope for an end to this cruel occupation and realization of their inalienable rights.

"It is not coincidental that the Israeli aggression was launched against a backdrop of heightened pressure on Israel in the peace process; international acceptance of the Palestinian national consensus Government; unanimous condemnation of settlement activities and the Gaza blockade; and rising calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. It is an obvious repeat of past crises created by Israel to divert attention and evade efforts to advance a peaceful solution to the conflict, by only paying lip-service to peace while it actively sabotages the two-State solution with total disrespect for international law and contempt for the international community.

"That is why — despite the global calls for a just solution based on two States on the pre-1967 borders, the historic compromise made by the Palestinian leadership over a quarter century ago, over two decades of negotiations and the passage of more than 48 years since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967) — the political impasse continues and peace remains elusive. This is why resolution 69/23 remains unimplemented. It is the direct outcome of Israel's illegal, combative behavior by which it continues to deny Palestinian rights and perpetuate its illegal occupation and of its rejection of peace, bad faith and obstruction of all attempts to revive negotiations based on clear parameters rooted in the Security Council's resolutions.

"Aiming to prevent further destabilization, stem the human suffering and salvage the prospects for peace, Palestine has repeatedly drawn international attention to this grave situation and called for action in line with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved justly in all aspects. The Palestinian leadership remains insistent that a just peace is the only remedy for the conflict and the violence, deprivation and instability it engenders, and firmly rejects the claims that "now is not the right time" for a solution. That time is actually long overdue. As we witness the instability in Palestine and throughout the region, we do not have the luxury to continue delaying peace. Moreover, the Palestinian people can no longer delay realization of their human rights, nor accept rationales asking them to endure more violations, suffering and indignities, while the occupying Power is placated and appeased, not even being held accountable for its most egregious crimes.

"Regrettably, our appeals and efforts have been to no avail and the Security Council remains paralyzed and the international community unable to effectively confront Israeli impunity. This makes it more imperative for the General Assembly to act boldly to address this tragic conflict, which has been on the agenda of the Organization since its inception, yet shamefully remains unresolved. Here, in conjunction with the relevant United Nations resolutions, we stress the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and its promise for opening doors to a new era of peace, stability, cooperation and collective action for our common goals and problems. The international community must call on Israel to reciprocate this historic initiative.

"Palestine seeks peace and coexistence with Israel, but this must be based on freedom and justice. This requires a complete end to the Israeli occupation and the colonial, racist policies that have fueled it for five decades.

Respect for international law and human rights, not military might and violence, must be the core of this peace. Interim solutions or other palliatives to 'ease' or manage the situation will not suffice. The root causes and underlying issues of the conflict must be addressed in accordance with international law.

"The plight of the Palestinian people — from Occupied Palestine to our refugee camps in the region, especially in Syria — is an existential crisis urgently demanding a just solution. We appeal to the General Assembly to uphold the legal, political and moral responsibilities in this regard and likewise extend this appeal to the entire United Nations system and Member States to uphold their responsibilities. We also recall relevant declarations by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, most recently on 17 December 2014, and the obligations in this regard.

"The Security Council in specific is duty-bound to address this conflict, which continues to threaten international peace and security, and must act towards bringing a definitive end to the occupation and conflict and establishing a just and lasting peace. Pending that achievement, action must be taken to ensure protection to the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation, an obligation that the occupying Power has abdicated as it willfully and wantonly causes harm to the population and is the direct source of their insecurity, suffering and vulnerability.

"The foundations for peace must be firmly set before this opportunity is lost to us and the two-State solution is relegated to the archives of history. The political will must be found to compel Israel to cease all of its illegal policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and comply with its legal obligations. Moreover, there must be accountability for Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. Peace and accountability are not mutually exclusive; both can and must be pursued, for impunity will always obstruct peace and peace cannot exist without justice.

"We also underscore the universal view that failure to achieve a just solution to the conflict and continued denial of Palestinian rights, including Palestine's rightful place among the community of nations, have severely undermined international law and the international system, including the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. However, despite the failures and setbacks, the Palestinian people still look to the United Nations, with the democratic General Assembly at the forefront, to act with conscience to establish peace and fulfill the covenant made over 67 years ago to the Palestinian people in regard to their inalienable rights, foremost to self-determination. On its part, the Palestinian Government remains ready to make peace, based on the longstanding parameters, and will continue cooperating with all international efforts, based on its conviction in the rule of law and resolve to achieve a just solution that will achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, and achieve Palestinian-Israeli peace, security and coexistence.

"We are at a crossroads that will determine whether the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders will become reality or meet its demise. For genuine progress to be

made, the crisis on the ground and root causes of this conflict must be seriously redressed. Respect for resolution 69/23 and all relevant resolutions would certainly enhance peace prospects. If, however, Israel remains intransigent, peace efforts will continue failing and we will have to face the end of the two-State solution and the onset of new collective efforts — political, legal and popular — for alternative solutions to end the injustice and realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

"We express appreciation for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the United Nations system as a whole in support of a peaceful solution and of Palestinian humanitarian and developmental needs. We also recognize the important role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in raising international awareness and support for Palestinian rights and a just solution. We also reiterate gratitude for the principled support of all concerned States and civil society worldwide, and urge that no effort be spared to achieve long-overdue freedom, justice and dignity for the Palestinian people and lasting peace and security for our region."

6. The note verbale dated 13 August 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

"As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. Resolution 69/23 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually, and automatically, by the General Assembly which only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

"The State of Israel continuously strives to attain a peaceful settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians and to promote peace in the region. Time and time again Israel has demonstrated to the international community its commitment to finding a long-lasting solution to the conflict. Resolution 69/23 overlooks the steps Israel has taken, and continues to take, to end the conflict.

"At the same time, resolution 69/23 fails to examine the situation objectively, disregarding the role played by the Palestinians in making it more difficult to attain a peaceful resolution to the conflict, in particular the role of Hamas.

"In August 2005, Israel dismantled its settlements and military presence and disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Rather than using this opportunity for development, Hamas took advantage of Israel's absence to launch terror attacks from Gaza against Israeli citizens. Terror activities escalated further after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2006. Despite Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas has continued to target Israeli civilians with thousands of rockets. Hamas' unprovoked attacks are not the consequence of efforts to seek redress of legitimate grievances, as some claim. Rather they are a consequence of Hamas' guiding ideology.

"Hamas is a virulently anti-Semitic organization, whose very charter calls on Muslims to kill Jews. Hamas is not dedicated to improving the plight

of the people of Gaza. Instead, its goal is nothing less than the destruction of Israel, no matter the cost to the Palestinian population.

"Last summer, the State of Israel faced constant attack as Hamas launched more than 4,500 rockets at civilian populations in Israeli towns and communities. Israel's south has been the target of bombardment for 15 years, its children constantly subject to indiscriminate attacks from Gaza. Operation 'Protective Edge' was launched as a last resort to reinstate safety and security to its citizens, litres following the abduction and murder by Hamas of three Israeli teenagers and the barrage of rockets targeting the Israeli population that followed.

"During the operation, Israel kept the crossing into Gaza open despite the constant rocket attacks, including those targeting the crossings themselves. Over the course of those days (8 July-27 August) 5,779 trucks of goods, 4.58 million litres of diesel fuel for the Gaza power station, 1.73 million litres of diesel fuel for UNRWA, 9.8 million litres of diesel fuel and 4.26 million litres of gasoline for transportation needs entered Gaza from Israel. Throughout the entire conflict, the Erez crossing remained open for medical purposes.

"Despite the relentless and acute threats to its security, Israel is actively working to support reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. Israel has intensified its cooperation with the international community and with the Palestinian Authority to facilitate sustainable infrastructural and economic development in Gaza, in order to meet both the short-term and long-term needs of the civilian population.

"The following are a few of the extensive measures undertaken by Israel to facilitate reconstruction in Gaza.

"The border crossings between Israel and Gaza have been upgraded to allow up to 800 truckloads of building materials and other goods to enter the Gaza Strip on a daily basis. Every single day, approximately 550 truckloads of goods, carrying everything from foodstuffs to vehicles, pass into Gaza from Israel. Israel has also allocated approximately $10 million to further expand the capacity of the crossings to over 1,000 trucks a day.

"It is important to note that for the past five years, all types of foodstuffs, as well as all consumer and other goods, have been allowed to enter Gaza from Israel. The only prohibited items are weapons and a short list of dual-use items that can be exploited for use in terrorism.

"Israel has facilitated the passage of over 1.2 million tons of materials into Gaza since the end of last summer's conflict with Hamas. Of these materials, over 260,000 tons were sent for the reconstruction mechanism, over 281,000 tons for international community projects and nearly 650,000 tons for reconstructing roads.

"Israel is facilitating construction projects in Gaza, including housing (sometimes the construction of entire neighborhoods) as well as schools, clinics and infrastructure projects. Such projects may be initiated and funded by international organizations, foreign States, the Palestinian Authority, or private entities. Recent progress in these projects includes laying the

cornerstone for the third stage of a neighborhood in Rafah with 220 housing units, as well as for the al-Zafer Tower project in Gaza City.

"There are currently 367 ongoing construction projects initiated by international organizations, in various stages of implementation. As of June 17, approximately 63 per cent of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) projects have been completed or are in the implementation stage (with work being carried out or approved yet awaiting the start of work). Ninety-four per cent of the international projects outside GRM have been completed or are in the implementation stage.

"More than 14,000 people enter Israel from the Gaza Strip every single month. This monthly figure includes many thousands of Gazan businessmen, pilgrims to the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, medical care patients and their escorts on their way to receive urgent medical treatment in Israel and non-urgent medical treatment in the West Bank, and many more.

"Israel has doubled the number of entry permits from Gaza for members of the business sector.

"Israel has also facilitated the entry of reconstruction personnel into Gaza, issuing more than 1,000 permits since summer 2014 for travel from the West Bank. Likewise, Israel has also facilitated the entry of engineers and other relevant professionals into Gaza for international community projects.

"Above and beyond the reconstruction efforts, Israel has also undertaken measures to strengthen the economy of Gaza and improve the lives of its residents.

"Since October 2014, Israel has facilitated the export of nearly 6 million tons of industrial goods (mainly textiles and furniture) and agricultural produce (including fish) from Gaza, via Israel, and marketed to the West Bank, to Israel and abroad.

"Israel has doubled the amount of water it supplies to Gaza from 5 million to 10 million cubic meters of water annually (2.6 billion United States gallons). This is in addition to the 125 MW of electricity that Israel supplies to the Gaza Strip.

"Other economy boosting measures include: setting the fishing zone off Gaza's coastline for Palestinian boats at 10 km (6 miles); the establishment of a Coca-Cola factory, with the requested equipment, in the Karni Industrial Estate; and the import of engines and second-hand vehicles into the Gaza Strip.

"Israel has undertaken these measures, and many more, despite the major security risks they pose. In the past, Hamas (an internationally recognized terror organization) has diverted massive amounts of aid and imported goods for use in its terrorist infrastructure. For instance, building materials worth tens of millions of dollars were diverted by Hamas for the construction of their cross-border tunnels, which were used to attack Israel during the summer 2014 conflict. Hamas continues to pursue its efforts to rearm, expand its rocket arsenal and construct the infrastructure it plans to use in its next attack on Israel.

"Despite Israel's best efforts, some reconstruction is being hindered by forces beyond its control. Delays in reconstruction predominantly stem from the actions of Hamas, which controls Gaza, and the conflict between this terrorist organization and the Palestinian Authority. For example, Hamas refuses to allow the Palestinian Authority to take security and civilian responsibility for the Palestinian side of Gaza's border crossings with Israel and Egypt. Furthermore, Hamas continues to misappropriate construction materials for use in terrorist infrastructures. For its part, the Palestinian Authority wants to weaken the Hamas regime and this goal appears to be influencing the pace and extent of its reconstruction activities.

"The Palestinian Authority is not only obstructing the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure in Gaza, it has failed to construct a credible political infrastructure. The path to a peaceful settlement requires good governance and leadership responsive to the will of the people. Yet, the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, is in his eleventh year of a five-year term.

"The aforementioned steps taken by the State of Israel attest to its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, this commitment has not been reciprocated. On the one hand, Hamas has, time and time again, chosen to invest in terror, not peace. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority is avoiding its responsibility for the people it claims to represent, and fails to lay the foundations for good governance.

"The State of Israel reiterates its willingness for an agreement in accord with the principles of the two-State solution and acknowledges the important role played by the Quartet in this matter. Israel calls on the Palestinian Authority to reaffirm its adherence to the achievement of a permanent and comprehensive resolution of the conflict, by engaging in confidence building measures and bilateral agreements in lieu of unilateral declarative actions in various multinational forums."

II. Observations

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine focused on the possibility of creating a framework for the parties' return to meaningful negotiations. Apart from a meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian chief negotiators in Amman in late July 2015, there were no direct peace process-related talks between the two leaderships.

8. During most of the reporting period, which immediately followed the devastating war in Gaza, the situation on the ground was characterized by relatively low levels of violence, a gradual easing of movement restrictions and a slowdown in settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. However, there were periods of heightened tension and violence in October and November 2014 and July 2015. The situation in Gaza remained volatile, owing mainly to worsening socioeconomic conditions, delays in reconstruction, deterioration in internal security, continued movement restrictions and the deepening political divide between the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and the West Bank.

9. On 30 December, a draft Security Council resolution seeking to reach a final status agreement and an end to the occupation by the end of 2017 failed to pass.

10. The following day, President Abbas signed instruments of accession to 18 international treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. On 2 January, I accepted the submission of 16 instruments of accession after having ascertained that the instruments received were in due and proper form.

11. On 3 January, in retaliation, Israel, contrary to its obligations under the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords, commenced the withholding of tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority for the month of December. An agreement was reached on 27 March between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel under which Israel transferred more than $470 million in withheld revenues.

12. On 17 March, general elections were held in Israel. I was deeply concerned by many of the hard-line statements made in the final days of campaigning. I urged the incoming Government of Israel to act on Prime Minister Netanyahu's reaffirmations, after his re-election, of his commitment to the two-State solution. The Middle East Quartet met at the principals level on 8 February in Munich. The Quartet prioritized the urgent resumption of negotiations and a strengthening of its engagement to prepare for a revival of the peace process, including through regular and direct outreach to the Arab States and the promotion of the Arab Peace Initiative. It also called for the acceleration of reconstruction in Gaza. In July, Quartet envoys, as part of an active outreach effort, engaged constructively with Egypt, Jordan and the League of Arab States.

13. Last summer's conflict in Gaza — the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israel and the subsequent Israel Defence Forces' so-called "Operation Protective Edge" — led to levels of death and destruction unprecedented in this conflict. I deeply regret the loss of civilian life during the escalation. The intensity and destructiveness of the conflict substantially exacerbated the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including the observed deterioration of food security, physical and mental health, access to basic services and economic livelihoods.

14. In the aftermath of the hostilities, efforts were made to strengthen the ceasefire brokered by Egypt on 26 August 2014. Addressing dire conditions of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip remained my priority during the reporting period. To facilitate reconstruction efforts, the United Nations brokered an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Government of national consensus establishing procedures to enable "dual-use" materials to enter Gaza and their use to be monitored. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism was designed as a temporary measure to enable the entry of critical construction materials at scale and for a wide range of stakeholders in the immediate post-conflict period. The ultimate objective of the United Nations in Gaza continues to be the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and in a manner which relieves the suffering of the people of Gaza and addresses the legitimate security concerns of Israel.

15. I travelled to Cairo on 12 October for the International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, hosted by Egypt and supported by Norway. The event garnered $5.4 billion in pledges from some 50 countries, with $3.5 billion intended to support Gaza. As at 14 April, the World Bank reported that only 27.5 per cent of those pledges had been disbursed. I again urge donors to fulfil the pledges

they made in Cairo last October. From the outset of the conflict in Gaza, I called on all combatants to respect the sanctity of United Nations premises. However, a number of incidents occurred during the hostilities in which United Nations personnel, premises and operations were affected. In response, I established an internal board of inquiry to review and investigate 10 of those incidents. On 27 April, I released a comprehensive summary of the Board's report. The Board found that the seven incidents in which United Nations premises were hit were attributable to Israel.

16. The Board also reviewed three incidents involving weapons found in UNRWA schools. In two instances, the Board found that Palestinian armed groups might have used UNRWA school premises to launch attacks. The Board also made a number of recommendations, including on ways of further improving coordination between the United Nations and the Government of Israel to better ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises. I am actively pursuing these recommendations.

17. I fully supported the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict, led by Justice Mary McGowan Davis, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1, and its broad investigation into all alleged human rights and international humanitarian law violations that took place before, during and after the military operations in Gaza between 13 June and 26 August 2014. It is my hope that the report of the Commission will pave the way for justice for all of the victims of last year's fighting.

18. Alarmingly, unemployment in Gaza reached 43 per cent at the end of 2014. The conditions in an already devastated Gaza will only worsen, and the risks of violence and radicalization increase, if the underlying causes of previous conflicts are not soon addressed.

19. The security implications of the persistent pressures on Gazan society continue to be felt. Worryingly, reports are increasing of extremist elements seeking to gain a greater foothold in Gaza in an attempt to ride on the local wave of discontent.

20. Under the leadership of President Abbas, the Palestinian Government of national consensus — which is fully committed to the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) — must be empowered and enabled to assume its rightful responsibilities in Gaza, including in particular at the crossings with Israel and Egypt. Palestinian unity and civil service integration must be addressed as a priority. The United Nations stands ready to support the President and the Government of Palestine and all factions in their efforts to reunite the West Bank and Gaza, in line with the intra-Palestinian unity agreement of 23 April 2014.

21. I also welcomed Egypt's decision — following consultations with President Abbas — to open the Rafah crossing for an extended period in June. A regular and predictable schedule for the opening of Rafah is needed for the movement of people, especially for humanitarian cases, as the security situation allows.

22. Since the establishment of the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, approximately 90,000 households in Gaza have accessed construction material for partially damaged housing. In this regard, on 22 June, the Palestinian Ministry of Public Works and Housing launched the "Residential Stream", which is intended to provide simplified access to construction material for the rebuilding of the approximately 18,000 completely or severely destroyed homes, as well as for the

construction of completely new housing to help offset the pre-war housing deficit of approximately 70,000 units. Some 1,700 beneficiaries have already been cleared and around 600 have purchased the required construction materials. These are positive steps on the long road to meeting Gaza's reconstruction needs. I would like to acknowledge and encourage a continuation of Israel's constructive cooperation with the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.

23. There have been a number of other significant achievements since the end of hostilities in August 2014. Notably, the last internally displaced persons left the United Nations collective centres in Gaza on 17 June 2015. Nevertheless, the overall reconstruction of Gaza remains slow, with considerable financing gaps. On 12 February, the United Nations, in partnership with the Government of Palestine, launched the Strategic Response Plan for 2015, which aims to address the humanitarian needs of 1.6 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The Plan requests $705 million, 75 per cent of which is for Gaza.

24. The reporting period witnessed one attempt to break the Gaza maritime blockade. The Israeli navy intercepted the *Marianne*, a vessel which was part of the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla", on 29 June in international waters. I reiterate my calls on the Government of Israel to lift all closures, with due consideration of Israel's legitimate security concerns.

25. The Government of Israel has taken several positive steps in that direction, including lifting the eight-year ban on exports from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank, increasing quotas and expanding criteria for the exit of Palestinians from Gaza through the Erez crossing and increasing the capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing. As a result, we have seen a significant rise in the number of people and goods passing through the crossings. I encourage the Government of Israel to pursue this policy further.

26. I remain worried about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are the reports of arbitrary detention being carried out by Palestinian security forces and the reports of ill-treatment in detention centres in Gaza. I call on the de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its responsibilities, with full respect for international human rights laws.

27. In July, the Government of Israel revealed that two of its citizens had entered the Gaza Strip independently, in two separate incidents, since September 2014. I reiterate my call to all relevant Palestinian actors in Gaza to provide information as to the possible whereabouts and conditions of the missing Israelis and to take prompt action to facilitate their safe return to their families.

28. On 30 July, the Palestinian Authority announced a partial reshuffle of the current Government, appointing five new ministers. Hamas rejected the reshuffle, arguing that it was not in line with previous agreements.

29. Violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued. The causes included Israeli security operations, violence by Jewish extremists, protests and attacks against Israelis by Palestinians and religious tensions associated with the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. The Israel Defense Forces conducted 4,236 search and arrest operations, resulting in 5,638 Palestinians being arrested. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a total of 27 Palestinian civilians were killed and 2,755 Palestinians injured. Seven Israeli civilians and one of the Israel Defense

Forces personnel were killed and 112 Israeli civilians and 60 Israeli security forces personnel were injured. The Palestinian Authority continued arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank.

30. Shortly after the beginning of the reporting period, the Government of Israel appeared to put on hold settlement planning and tendering in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The so-called planning freeze was violated in July by the Government's decision to advance construction and "legalization" of hundreds of units. Settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law.

31. Settler violence has decreased since 2014. As the result of attacks by settlers 2 Palestinians were killed and 86 Palestinians, including 22 children, were injured during the reporting period. Four Israeli settlers were killed and 96 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians. The most egregious example of settler violence during the reporting period took place on 31 July, when Ali Dawabsha, a Palestinian toddler, was murdered and the members of his family severely injured during an attack on their home in the West Bank. Ali's father, Sa'ad Dawabsha, died from his wounds on 8 August. I condemned this despicable act of terror, as did the Security Council and the leadership of Israel. The incident led to violent demonstrations, resulting in clashes between Palestinians in the West Bank and the Israel Defense Forces, as well as attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinians. In addition, rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza and subsequent Israeli airstrikes were conducted. As I have stated numerous times, the indiscriminate firing of rockets against Israeli civilian targets by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza is a violation of international law.

32. The demolitions and evictions that took place in Area C of the West Bank are of deep concern and were condemned by the international community. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime if they are not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions. During the reporting period, 441 structures were demolished, causing the displacement of some 632 Palestinians, including 344 children. I reiterate my concern about the fate of 7,000 Palestinian Bedouins and herders in the occupied West Bank, who may be at risk of forcible transfer as Israel advances its plan to relocate these communities in three sites in Area C. This plan, which may be linked to settlement expansion in E1 and other areas, would seriously jeopardize the realization of the two-State solution. Similarly, I repeat my deep concern over the Israeli demolition orders for Susiya. I am also concerned about the risk of a forcible transfer of the Um al-Kheir Bedouin refugee community after the recent demolition of five dwellings next to an Israeli settlement near Hebron. Demolitions and forcible transfers contravene international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

33. Tensions also continued in occupied East Jerusalem, especially in the autumn months of 2014. Escalating tensions surrounding access to the holy sites contributed significantly to the spike in violence. The shooting of a campaigner for Jewish prayer rights on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 29 October was followed by a series of attacks in East Jerusalem, including clashes at the Noble Sanctuary. Restrictions on access to holy sites in the Old City were imposed on the Palestinians, leading to multiple clashes between worshippers and the Israeli security forces. King Abdullah of Jordan and United States Secretary of State Kerry organized separate meetings with President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu in

Amman on 13 November. Both sides announced firm commitments to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites.

34. As of August 2015, 370 Palestinians were held by Israeli authorities in administrative detention, compared with 477 at the beginning of the reporting period. I reiterate my long-standing position that those detained must be charged and brought to trial or released without delay. The Government's decision on 14 June, which was subsequently approved by the Knesset, to permit force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strike under certain conditions is in contravention of international conventions.

35. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme. Despite a strong international consensus that the Palestinian Authority was capable of running a State, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee was concerned about its economic viability during the reporting period. It maintained that concerted action was urgently required to stabilize the fiscal position of the Palestinian Authority, which faces a deficit of approximately $500 million for 2015, and to rekindle private sector-led economic growth. Efforts towards structural reform by the Palestinian Authority, including fiscal containment, and adequate and predictable assistance to the Government of Palestine by donors were considered essential to manage the deficit. The International Monetary Fund reported on 29 January that Palestinian economic activity had contracted in 2014 for the first time since 2006.

36. Israel has taken several steps to ease movement restrictions in the West Bank, including allowing entry into Israel without permit for Palestinian men over 55 and women over 50. Further measures were implemented during Ramadan, although they were later retracted owing to an escalation in violence. I also note positively that the number of Palestinians from the West Bank employed in Israel continued its rise of the past few years and is today at its highest since the beginning of the peace process in the early 1990s. I strongly encourage the Government of Israel to continue implementing measures that would facilitate sustainable growth and job creation for the Palestinian economy.

37. As noted in my last report, I remain seriously concerned about the lack of political progress and the high risk of an outbreak of violence between Israel and Palestinian militants. What is important now is for the international community to work together with the parties on the ground and in the region to create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take further steps to ease the restrictions in place in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians to pursue the path of non-violence and unity, in line with the PLO commitments, and call on them to make efforts to improve law and order, to combat extremism and incitement against Israel and to continue building strong and democratic institutions, which are essential to a viable, independent Palestinian State.

38. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, whom I appointed on 5 February, and his predecessor, Robert H. Serry, whom I thank for his outstanding performance during his seven-year tenure. I am also grateful to Pierre Krähenbühl for his able leadership as Commissioner-General of UNRWA. I pay tribute, too, to all United Nations staff who work in this area under difficult, at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the United Nations. In May, Tony

Blair stepped down from his position as Quartet Representative for the Middle East. I reiterate my appreciation for his leadership over eight years.

39. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace with a secure Israel, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.

United Nations S/2015/678*

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 September 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 1 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the concept note for the Security Council open debate entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region", to be held on 30 September 2015 under the presidency of the Russian Federation in the Security Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and the annexed concept note circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

* Reissued for technical reasons on 11 September 2015.

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Annex to the letter dated 1 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Maintenance of international peace and security: settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region

Concept note

The Russian Federation proposes to hold on 30 September 2015 a ministerial-level Security Council open debate on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region", to engage in comprehensive consideration of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa.

Context

The Middle East and North Africa region has entered a period of instability and potential conflict marked by increased tensions over internal politics, socioeconomic, ethnic, religious and generational factors, and divergent world views. A number of States face a threat to their unity, territorial integrity and independence. Many countries in the region have been targets of terrorist aggression. As these factors represent a challenge to the system of international peace and security, dialogue among civilizations and the non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction, they require urgent responses. New crises have arisen to join conflicts of long standing.

The lack of a genuine negotiation process and the status quo that has persisted for years in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are further aggravating the situation. The unresolved Palestinian issue is causing sporadic outbreaks of violence around the Gaza Strip and recurrent violence in the West Bank. The stalemate in the Middle East and the question of the final status of the Palestinian territories, not yet resolved on the basis of a universally recognized international legal framework, foster radicalization in the "Arab street" and create fertile ground for the spread of terrorist views.

The situation in Iraq since 2003 has unfolded so adversely that the country has been, for all intents and purposes, torn asunder, with some parts of its territory now strongholds of international terrorism. This, in turn, has led to religious confrontation, an extremely dangerous trend. Only sustained collective efforts by the international community, supported by the Government of Iraq, to counter Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as well as Al-Qaida and associated groups, are capable of eliminating the challenge of terrorism.

The bloody Syrian conflict has created fertile ground for the consolidation in part of the country of a terrorist "caliphate". There is no military solution to the conflict. The way to resolve it is through a Syrian-led political process based on the 2012 Geneva communiqué, with the Syrian parties and the regional and international community joining forces to effectively counter the serious terrorist

threat, on the basis of rejection of double standards and respect for the principle of national sovereignty.

The events of 2011 continue to exercise a grave impact on Libya. To achieve a settlement and effectively counter the growing threat of terrorism requires the establishment of a national reconciliation Government and mandatory consolidation of the army and security structures, with appropriate international support.

The situation in Yemen has deteriorated severely. In view of the need to counter the terrorist threat in that country, action on the ceasefire and the launch of the political process under United Nations auspices is urgently needed, as well as prompt measures to remedy the humanitarian situation.

The purpose of the debate

There is a need for a comprehensive analysis of the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa that includes identification of areas for collective work on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

Only by adhering to the norms and principles of international law can we restore confidence in the future in the Middle East and North Africa, put an end to the shredding of its sociocultural fabric and revive confidence in relations among States and religious and ethnic groups.

The Security Council should play the key role in harmonizing collective approaches, based on respect for the diversity of cultures and civilizations in the modern world and the democratization of international relations, and it is the Council that must develop ways to understand the full range of security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa.

Current realities dictate the need for a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and the establishment of a lasting peace, an approach that includes measures to eliminate the causes of conflict. Interaction among all members of the international community must involve a quest for a common understanding of both the causes of the current profound security crisis in the region and of the political and other factors aggravating the crisis. Only such an understanding, worked out within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, can lead to the implementation by the international community of agreed measures to prevent escalation of the conflict and terrorist activity in the region. Interference in the internal affairs of States, the use of force in defiance of the Security Council and the provision of arms to non-State groups and factions professing radical ideology exacerbate the situation in the region and increase the risk of terrorism.

Instability factors and courses of action

1. Measures to counter terrorism

Most of the conflicts in the Middle East are exacerbated by the terrorist factor. The very existence of certain States in the region is threatened. Terrorists take control of territory, establishing on it their own quasi-administrations and interacting with the public according to laws and regulations promulgated by extremists. The aims of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant are territorial expansion and the establishment of a terrorist "caliphate".

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Nusra Front, Al-Qaida and other related entities operating in the Middle East and North Africa have the support of global recruitment networks, spread extremist ideology virtually unchecked using modern information and communication technologies and especially the Internet, and are funded from sizeable and diversified criminal sources. Primary among these are the illicit trade in oil and other mineral resources, illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons and cultural property, and voluntary contributions from extremist sympathizers.

One dangerous tendency, the movement of foreign terrorist fighters into the Middle East conflict area (Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen), further complicates resolution processes. It must be noted that existing procedures for information-sharing among States and mechanisms for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition are not yet commensurate with the level and nature of the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and do not support an effective response to this phenomenon.

Countering incitement to terrorism and preventing the spread of terrorist ideology are very important areas of conflict resolution efforts.

This task has acquired a new dimension in the context of countering the influx of foreign terrorist fighters. This problem will not be resolved merely by encouraging tolerance and providing good governance or through counter-messages. The spread of terrorist ideology, especially through modern information and communication technologies and the Internet, must be countered resolutely.

The risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, especially terrorists, must be further assessed, in particular in the light of information on the use of chemical weapons by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

There is a need to consider ways to step up implementation of the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council, and additional measures to be taken in that regard.

Above all, there is a need to focus on aiding the legitimate national Governments that are fighting terrorism on their territory. The approach should be comprehensive and free of double standards. Given the interconnectedness of the Middle East conflicts, assisting some Governments while ignoring others, or, worse yet, criminalizing them, exacerbates destabilizing trends.

Joint efforts were needed to support the good offices of the Secretary-General on various issues relating to the Middle East, as well as the mediation efforts undertaken by regional organizations and individual Member States.

Steps to implement the Arab Peace Initiative and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme are deserving of particular attention, as are other internationally agreed frameworks for action to improve the situation in the Middle East.

2. *Overcoming religious and sectarian strife*

Middle East conflicts are characterized by a flagrant disregard for human life and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Terrorist acts motivated by hatred of particular religions and faiths are becoming increasingly frequent.

Resolving this problem requires a set of coordinated measures to counter extremist ideology at all levels.

There must be a heightened focus on promoting a culture of peace at the national, regional and international levels, on addressing the issue of the "lost generation", especially in countries where terrorism has a significant presence, and on promoting peace and non-violence.

3. *Humanitarian and economic assistance*

The Middle East conflicts result in large-scale suffering and loss of life, and severe financial and economic consequences for the countries in conflict and their neighbours.

Development, peace and security and human rights are closely linked. Activity in these areas is cumulative and must be approached in a holistic and comprehensive way.

Concern for preserving and developing solid, stable and strong national institutions, including security services, should be the cornerstone of international efforts to assist States in the Middle East and North Africa.

Issues relating to internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants, rehabilitation of infrastructure and the preservation of cultural heritage sites must be urgently addressed. These issues and that of assistance to States of the region should not be addressed selectively. Unilateral sanctions and embargoes do not contribute to the objectives of settlement. Moreover, in most cases, their hasty application signifies reluctance to seek a settlement by peaceful, diplomatic means.

Issues for consideration

- What are the reasons for the increased potential for conflict in the Middle East and North Africa?
- What conclusions can be drawn from a comparative analysis of the origins and development trends of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa after the so-called Arab Spring?
- What needs to be done to prevent conflicts in the region, including those arising on the basis of religion or ethnicity, and to ensure the protection of religious and ethnic minorities there from radical extremists?
- What is required to ensure true synergy in the efforts of all States in combating the terrorist threat?
- What can be done to continue the joint strengthening of existing mechanisms and building of new ones to counter at the international level the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters?
- What can be done to secure the compliance of each and every State with the objectives set out in Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions?
- What is the role of the United Nations and its component bodies in curbing terrorist threats in the Middle East and North Africa and in countering incitement to terrorism and the spread of terrorist ideology? Is there potential

for increasing counter-terrorism coordination within the United Nations system?

Outcome of the debate

It is proposed that the Council adopt a presidential statement in which it stresses the urgency of adopting measures to resolve and prevent conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and sets out possible further steps to reduce terrorist risks in the region.

United Nations S/2015/679

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 September 2015
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 1 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Syrian towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate have been under total siege by armed terrorist groups since 28 March 2015. The 30,000 inhabitants face the crime of genocide while the international community, including certain States that are the most vocal about fighting terrorism, stands by in silence.

The armed terrorist groups, which are supported by States that are known to all, have not been content just to besiege those two cities for months and starve the residents to death slowly by preventing the entry of food, drink, medicine and fuel. They have rained down hundreds of rockets daily — on many days more than a thousand — in order to finish off those who have not been killed by hunger and thirst. They are using various types of the rockets for which they have invented such special names as "hell cannon", "gas canister rockets", "elephant rockets" and "dinosaur rockets". The result has been death for many civilians and partial or permanent disability and disfigurement for many others, most of them women, children and the elderly.

These crimes, which are being committed in the two besieged towns by armed terrorist groups, notably the Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham, with logistical support and direct instructions from the Turkish leadership, are just the latest in a series of systematic terrorist crimes to which all components of the Syrian population are being subjected. They constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide under international law. The perpetrators are terrorist groups armed with a destructive obscurantist mindset based solely on branding people as infidels and killing anyone with a different opinion, ideology or creed. The deviant sheikhs of the terrorist *takfirist* Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham organizations have issued a fatwa that legitimizes the slaughter of all the men in those two cities should they be overrun, with the goal of sowing hatred, fanaticism, extremism and strife in a society that has been distinguished over the course of countless years by its love, harmony and brotherhood.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic urges the Security Council immediately to implement its counter-terrorism resolutions, in particular resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). In so doing, the Security Council should cooperate and coordinate closely with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is the principal party bearing the counter-terrorism burden on the ground in

Syria. It also urges the Security Council to expose the practices of the States that support and finance the armed terrorist groups, in particular the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Qatar and the Turkish leadership, and take immediate measures to make those States discontinue their support for the Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham organizations and other Al-Qaida-affiliated organizations in Syria. Such action would help to prevent a catastrophe in the towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya.

The time has come to take action instead of remaining silent in the face of the crimes of the terrorist organizations and their backers. The international community should place the blame for the failure of counter-terrorism on the parties that are preventing the Security Council from carrying out its counter-terrorism duties, and on those who support those parties. In particular, the Turkish leadership and its terrorists should be held responsible for any massacre perpetrated against the people of Fu'ah and Kafraya.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations

United Nations A/69/1021–S/2015/680

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
4 September 2015
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Agenda items 68 (c) and 107

Security Council
Seventieth year

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 1 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Jordan rejects the baseless allegations set out in the letter dated 25 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations (S/2015/664) and in his statement before the Security Council on 27 August 2015.

The Syrian regime's actions against its own people and its ongoing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights have created a hotbed for terrorism in Syria. The fact that such actions have continued without the perpetrators being held to account has fuelled terrorism and extremism in Syria and the region as a whole.

Over the last five years, owing to the actions and policies of the Syrian regime, millions of Syrians have been tortured, killed, starved and displaced. Now the Permanent Representative of Syria has delivered a briefing to the Security Council stating, without credibility, that his regime has been cooperating with the United Nations to improve the humanitarian situation. Yet United Nations reports have demonstrated that the regime is acting in bad faith and has sought to avoid its obligations by hurling accusations against those States that have proved — in deed, and not merely in word — that they are determined to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

Jordan reaffirms that it has consistently combated terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its source, because it is contrary to religious and moral teachings and values. Jordan also reiterates that it has unwaveringly fought against terrorism and extremism, and that all of its institutions will continue to confront terrorism comprehensively by stepping up their efforts and by coordinating and consulting with regional and international actors to consolidate security and stability in the region. Jordan condemns the Syrian regime's persistent and futile attempts to

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smear it using baseless allegations. Jordan has in fact long been a model for counter-terrorism from every point of view.

Lastly, we should like to once again call on the international community to deal firmly and swiftly with the Syrian regime in order to ensure compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014); the resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 69/189; and international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 68 (c) and 107, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/69/1020–S/2015/681

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
1 September 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Agenda item 64 (a)
Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Security Council
Seventieth year

Letter dated 28 August 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to you the report of the workshop, "Children and Armed Conflict: Implementing Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)" (see annex), convened by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs on 22 and 23 January 2015 in Berlin. The report reflects the views of the workshop participants.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Heiko **Thoms**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 28 August 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the workshop, Children and Armed Conflict: Implementing Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)

1. On 22 and 23 January 2015, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany convened a workshop on "Children and Armed Conflict: Implementing Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)", at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin. The workshop brought together representatives of States Members of the United Nations, including members of the Security Council, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Union and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions, to discuss measures to strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), and its related Guidance Note "Protect Schools and Hospitals". The workshop took place under the Chatham House Rules.

2. Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) was adopted under Germany's Presidency of the Security Council in July 2011. It added attacks on schools and hospitals, defined as a grave violation against children in armed conflict in Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), to the triggers for listing parties to conflict in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on Children and Armed Conflict. The Guidance Note was jointly launched on 21 May 2014, by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). Its objective is to strengthen monitoring and reporting on attacks on schools and hospitals, related protected personnel, and on the military use of schools.

Summary

3. On the first day of the workshop, participants discussed the background of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) and its provisions in closed sessions. Discussions were also held on the measures required to strengthen the implementation of the resolution, including the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflicts, and its state of endorsement by States Members of the United Nations (session I). UNICEF, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat of the United Nations and the NGO "Conflict Dynamics" presented various measures aimed at increasing the protection of schools and hospitals (session II). The last closed session of day one took the form of a discussion on the potential role of new technologies in reporting attacks on schools and hospitals (session III). Following the closed sessions, a public session was held with a broader audience, including parliamentarians, journalists and workshop participants. At that session, there was a presentation by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, followed by a discussion panel of four experts stressing the impact of armed conflict specifically on girls. On day two of the workshop,

attendees participated in a group exercise, using the Guidance Note to practice the reporting of attacks on schools and hospitals in various case studies (session IV). In a session on specific conflict situations and respective challenges (session V), participants assessed the situation in the West Bank, southern Thailand and Nigeria. In the concluding session, the workshop findings and observations were outlined, and the steps required to strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) were defined.

Taking stock of attacks on schools and hospitals and their military use

4. The first workshop session addressed the issue of attacks on schools and hospitals, and their military use. During this session, it was recalled that the Security Council has issued many resolutions aimed at protecting children. It was noted, however, that only if the international community works together, can children be adequately protected in armed conflicts. Participants agreed that the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to discuss the measures required to reach this common goal.

5. As a starting point, participants discussed the findings of a 2014 report called "Education Under Attack" by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. It was noted that from 2009 until 2013, attacks occurred in over 70 countries worldwide, more than ever previously reported. It is not clear, however, whether this was due to better monitoring, or to an increase of attacks. It was underlined that in some cases, students, teachers and schools had been targeted intentionally as a tactic of warfare. Afghanistan, Colombia, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan are the worst-affected countries. Schools there were attacked or used for military purposes in more than 1,000 incidents between 2009 and 2013.

6. The following reasons for attacks were identified by workshop participants:

(a) Ideological reasons: Armed groups see schools as "Western", or are opposed to the education of girls. A recent example of this was last year's abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok, Nigeria, by Boko Haram;

(b) Easy targets: Schools are typically State institutions and teachers are State employees. They are targeted to undermine confidence and support in the State. Schools are easier targets than Government forces;

(c) Lack of equal access to schools: Often lack of equal access can be a trigger for violence against education facilities;

(d) Military use of schools: Occasionally schools are attacked as a military target after being used for military purposes. Often, schools are used as a military base, barracks or detention centre. Of the 30 countries profiled in the report, in 24 countries schools were being used for military purpose from 2009 to 2013.

7. Participants agreed that military use of schools and attacks on them lead to:

(a) Death and destruction: Death, injury, fear, psychological stress for students and destruction of school buildings;

(b) Limited access to education: As a result of damage, schools are forced to close and it often takes years to rebuild them;

(c) Fewer girls attend school: Owing to the risk of sexual violence, parents are particularly afraid to send their daughters to schools;

(d) Costs of repairing schools: In South Sudan, there are currently fighters occupying 48 schools. In 2011, the cost of repairing these schools was approximately $67,000 per school. This is an enormous amount in a country where resources for education are limited;

(e) Loss of opportunities: Among other things, school closures lead to a loss of opportunities for children and the economy.

8. Most participants agreed that implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (formerly known as Lucens Guidelines) could improve the protection of students and education facilities during armed conflict. It was noted that, in its resolution 2143 (2014), the Security Council encouraged Governments to develop concrete measures to deter the use of schools by armed forces. Participants underlined that these Guidelines contain such measures, and urged States to incorporate them into their national legislation and military doctrine. The need for a declaration on safe schools, including a commitment to implement the Guidelines, was emphasized.

9. While analysing the legal dimension of the Guidelines, a number of participants underlined that these Guidelines are focused and useful. However, it was also noted that their legal implications raise some questions. This is due to a possible confusion concerning the precise boundary between binding rules of international humanitarian law and non-binding good practices in the Guidelines. While the recommendations are within the scope of human rights law, in some respects they exceed what is actually dictated by international humanitarian law in situations where it would be applicable as lex specialis. This might explain the reluctance of some States to endorse such Guidelines. It was underlined by some participants that the Guidelines are not intended to affect existing international law, but are rather perceived as a collection of best practices. A number of participants argued that the Guidelines should be implemented because they could effectively protect education facilities and students from suffering during armed conflict. As a way forward, and to alleviate the reservations of some States about the legal implications of the Guidelines, it was suggested that their political character and their focus on best practice policies should be clearly emphasized and that any impression that they represent international law as it stands, or an attempt to change international law, should be avoided.

10. With regard to the Guidelines, participants also stressed that even non-binding soft law Guidelines might have some impact on existing law. The following possible impacts were identified:

(a) Soft law might create expectations of good faith;

(b) Soft law might have an impact on the interpretation of existing international law;

(c) Soft law can become relevant in national legislation and jurisprudence (which is in fact the intended effect of the Guidelines);

(d) Soft law may also function as a catalyst for the evolution of customary international law. If a number of States consistently follow the Guidelines over a

certain period of time, and if these States develop a sense of legal obligation, there might be a change in customary international law.

How to better protect schools and hospitals

11. The second workshop session focused on concrete measures to better protect schools and hospitals. Participants examined how the military components in peacekeeping missions such as in the Sudan (United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)), South Sudan (United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)), Mali (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)), as well as civil society, can be partners in protecting schools and hospitals. The specific role of military components in peacekeeping missions in the protection of schools and hospitals encompasses:

(a) Prevention by implementing early warning and monitoring systems (the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2013 by MONUSCO);

(b) Protection by presence via active patrols around schools and building barriers (in the Sudan by UNAMID in 2012, in Darfur, South Sudan by UNMISS in July 2014, in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by MONUSCO in November 2014);

(c) Monitoring of grave violations and reporting information to child protection sections (MONUSCO — the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

12. Participants also evaluated the civilian components of peacekeeping operations, and emphasized the specific role of child protection advisers in the protection of schools and hospitals including:

(a) Mainstreaming and child protection training;

(b) Monitoring and reporting of grave violations (the so-called monitoring and reporting mechanism);

(c) Engaging the leadership of a mission;

(d) Entering into dialogue with parties to a conflict, especially with a view to achieving signed action plans on children and armed conflicts.

13. Participants identified various challenges that undermine the protection of schools and hospitals. These include the limited access to monitoring which directly affects the quality of the reporting, the occupation of schools by armed forces, as well as the limited dissemination of guidance (e.g., to legal advisers). The question of whether schools should be used as polling stations during conflict situations was also assessed.

14. Some of the challenges described above could be addressed by: increasing dissemination and application of the Guidance Note on Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), reviewing the Child Protection Policy of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, enhancing training for Child Protection Advisers, establishing child protection focal points (United Nations military and national armed forces), and providing briefings to the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

15. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), the development of new guidance for military components has been welcomed, in particular, the United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM, August 2012), the United Nations Force Headquarters Handbook (November 2014), and the Protection of Civilians: Implementing Guidelines for Military Components of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions (February 2015).

16. It was noted that the inclusion of clear language on child protection in United Nations-mandated missions is a long-standing request put forward in various prior workshops. For this, participants encouraged the use of specific language on schools and hospitals such as, "schools shall not be used by the military in their operations". Participants also pointed out that Battalion Commanders must inform conflict parties about the political consequences of specific violations of international humanitarian law.

17. There was consensus among participants that community engagement must be a priority when protecting schools. When communities realize schools deserve protection, it is much easier to ensure.

18. Participants drew attention to the overall lack of accountability for serious violations against children in armed conflict (i.e., the accountability gap). Noting the emphasis on the need for accountability in Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), in particular paragraph 11, they stressed that accountability is a means of providing a remedy, but that proper accountability mechanisms also aid prevention. This entails efforts at all levels — not only as part of international justice mechanisms — to assign responsibility, enforce laws and norms, reform systems and empower children and communities affected by armed conflict. Discussants also called for practical strategies for increased tangible accountability to be developed under all children and armed conflict accountability mechanisms, including those under the auspices of the Security Council.

19. With regard to expanding the monitoring and reporting mechanism triggers, it was agreed that it is important to bear in mind the additional costs that might be incurred by the expansion, especially as new situations may appear on the agenda.

The role of new technologies in reporting attacks on schools and hospitals

20. The third workshop session examined the role of new technologies in reporting attacks on schools and hospitals. Initially, a broad overview was presented on the increased role of new technology, and the range of its potential applications. New technologies are increasingly used in major humanitarian responses (including conflict situations), as well as in documenting human rights abuses, and in analysing patterns and trends of violence across locations and time. Different uses of new technologies that could potentially foster the monitoring and reporting of attacks, such as digital data collection, crowdsourcing data collection, crisis mapping, and remote sensing, have been introduced. The participants underlined that new technologies offer opportunities for strengthening the collection, analysis and use of information on attacks. However, it was also noted that these opportunities bring challenges and risks, such as ensuring the safety of people who collect and report data, something which also needs to be thoroughly considered.

21. Research shows that the average person spends up to 2.5 hours on digital devices every day, and over 80 per cent of that time on applications. For the

purposes of humanitarian technologies, it is important to note that much of this use can be tracked to developing countries. Between 2004 and 2015, the world has seen an increase of over 50 per cent in smartphone and Internet usage in regions such as Africa and the Middle East, while over 78 per cent of the world's mobile phone subscriptions are now to be found in developing countries.

22. As an example of how new technology can improve access to the normative framework of the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda of the Security Council, Watchlist presented the smartphone application "Children and Armed Conflict", that was developed in 2012 in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations. The application provides international policymakers, United Nations personnel and NGOs involved in child protection with ready access to key documents and recommendations for action. For example, it compiles all Security Council thematic resolutions on children and armed conflict, identifies the relevant underlying sources of international humanitarian and human rights law, and provides examples of model language on child protection from previous Security Council resolutions. It also includes a checklist specifically aimed at Security Council members on mainstreaming child protection in Security Council resolutions, with links to examples from previous resolutions. In a section entitled "Country situation", users will find background information on violations against children in armed conflict situations. To date, the Watchlist application has had over 4,600 downloads in more than 129 countries worldwide, with the bulk of those downloads in developing countries. The Children and Armed Conflict application was among the top three finalists for the "Human Rights Tulip Award". It is currently available in English and French, and will soon be available in Arabic.

23. The session also touched upon how to deal with legal questions associated with content generated through technology. In a presentation, a legal test of information, designed to ensure that generated content can be subject to legal prosecution, was introduced. The test comprises three steps assessing the relevance, the reliability and the way in which data was analysed. The question of how children can participate in documentation and at which age it is ethical to get them involved in it was also raised.

24. Examples of civilian-created video content highlighting human rights violations was also presented. The increasing number of smartphones, and other camera devices, has led to large volumes of footage captured by a greater diversity of people, thus benefiting the comprehensive documentation of human rights abuses. The participants underlined that video footage does not replace other types of evidence, but rather acts as an important contribution to assessing conflict situations. Verification of such videos was defined as a major challenge. Promising verification tools, for example "InformaCam" developed by the NGO WITNESS and The Guardian Project, are still in the testing phase.

25. In the discussion, participants expressed their support for innovative ideas in connection with new technologies in child protection. They welcomed the Watchlist smartphone application as a good example and suggested further development of the application, in particular by increasing its usability in the field. However, despite the benefits of new forms of data collection, it was stressed that the safety of those documenting situations and collecting data is of paramount importance.

26. Difficulties regarding the verification of collected information have to be overcome so that it can be used as evidence in court. Participants noted the trade-off

that can exist between improved verification through more information on the material's source and creator and concerns regarding the security of documenters. Data technology is difficult to use in court in general as the technological foundation is often challenged. Participants underlined that the technology is still evolving. There is a good chance that weaknesses can be eliminated.

27. Participants made it clear that expanding the use of the application and other innovative technologies would require further funding. Following the example of Liechtenstein, other Member States should consider providing funds for follow-up projects. A new platform for exchange between child protection and technology communities should be created to promote dialogue and leverage expertise.

Training session based on the Guidance Note

28. The fourth session spotlighted the Guidance Note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) on attacks on schools and hospitals. In the introductory remarks of the briefing, it was recalled that the Guidance Note aims to:

(a) Enhance understanding of the Security Council framework for attacks on schools and hospitals;

(b) Strengthen the monitoring and reporting of attacks, including definitions, violation categories and what information to collect;

(c) Provide tools for advocacy and dialogue, including Security Council-mandated action plans on attacks on schools and hospitals;

(d) Increase United Nations and civil society partnerships to halt, prevent and respond to attacks on schools and hospitals.

29. In the second part of the session, participants split up into groups. Each group was asked to draw from the Guidance Note and apply it to various concrete case studies, with a view to understanding the complexity of the specific violation and the practical realities for practitioners in the field. The aim was to create links between the persons implementing Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) on the ground and the actors involved in developing and strengthening the children and armed conflict mandate at the political level in the Security Council. The objective was to provide a sense of mutual understanding on the implications of Security Council provisions and guidance for persons in the field, and how challenges faced on the ground could be integrated in further deliberations on future Security Council resolutions relevant to a certain kind of violation. Throughout this exercise, groups examined the following questions: Is it a monitoring and reporting mechanism violation? If so, what information is needed? Is it a violation of international law? What is the reasoning? Would the violation be a trigger for listing? How would you approach advocacy/dialogue? Which immediate preventive and protective measures could be taken? The group exercise revealed how complex and challenging it can be to answer these questions. An interactive electronic version of the Guidance Note could therefore be a great asset to support and guide field personnel while monitoring and reporting attacks on schools and hospitals.

Specific conflict situations and respective challenges

30. The sixth workshop session highlighted the specific challenges of conflict situations in the West Bank, southern Thailand and Nigeria. During the session, participants emphasized several points:

(a) Schools present an easy target. While teachers may be seen as representing the State, children are not seen as children;

(b) Challenges remain regarding the verification and reliability of data. In Nigeria geographical imaging is a promising tool for preventing a much broader spectrum of attacks on schools. Participants called on States to refrain from obstructing United Nations agencies and NGOs in the verification of information;

(c) The monitoring and reporting mechanism has undoubtedly improved child protection, but there are still weaknesses. On the one hand, it was acknowledged that the monitoring and reporting mechanism is only a human instrument, employed by humans, and as such has its natural limits. On the other hand, participants highlighted the political limitations of the system that prevent the monitoring and reporting mechanism from realizing its full potential. The need to ensure the impartiality and neutrality of the monitoring and reporting mechanism was emphasized;

(d) Regarding the working methods in the Security Council and the Working Group, participants noted that the need for consensus makes it difficult to ensure that every situation is sufficiently considered by the Working Group.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions during the workshop, the following recommendations were made to strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolution 1998 (2001) and enhance the Children and Armed Conflict agenda:

The Security Council should, on a regular basis, invite UNESCO, UNICEF and other relevant civil society organizations to brief on attacks on education facilities and students when considering country-specific situations.

If fears that the Guidelines are aimed at changing international humanitarian law as it stands can be alleviated, States should consider endorsing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (formerly known as Lucens Guidelines), while emphasizing the practical values and best practice policies of the Guidelines.

More resources should be dedicated to understanding and addressing the root causes and methods of child recruitment by armed groups, and they should be made available to organizations developing strategies for prevention purposes.

States and United Nations organizations should step up efforts to support organizations monitoring, analysing, and evaluating the risk of child recruitment in vulnerable communities (cities, villages, refugee camps and schools), particularly in areas inside or bordering territories held by extremist groups.

The Security Council, States and all other relevant institutions and organizations with a mandate related to accountability for serious violations against children in armed conflict must step up efforts to develop and implement practical

strategies for increasing tangible accountability in the areas of assigning responsibility, enforcing laws and norms, reforming systems and empowering children and communities affected by armed conflict.

States, United Nations organizations and NGOs should employ technology as an important tool in the protection of children in armed conflict situations; the focus should be on closing the gap between NGO work on technology and the work of child protection advisers in the field, who often do not have access to innovative technological tools.

States and United Nations organizations should support projects aimed at developing new innovative technologies which improve the access to and flow of information on grave violations against children. This could be achieved by enhancing the Children and Armed Conflict mobile application developed by Watchlist to support field personnel in reporting and monitoring attacks on schools and hospitals. Such projects would also contribute to strengthening the communication between United Nations missions and the Security Council.

Local communities should be involved in protecting schools. Their initiative is crucial to protecting schools.

The capabilities of child protection advisers should be strengthened by offering more training programmes, and providing more resources for collecting and analysing information on attacks against schools and hospitals.

Those drafting United Nations mission mandates must understand that specialized child protection advisers are in a better position to protect children than human rights officers. The language of United Nations mission mandates must be drafted so as to ensure that the mission's child protection components are provided with the necessary capacities, resources and training.

More resources should be provided to strengthen national accountability mechanisms, including providing investigative and prosecutorial capacities for assigning responsibility to perpetrators. It should be ensured that reintegration programmes for empowering children are provided with the necessary funding.

The international child protection community should be encouraged to meet once a year to discuss issues related to the advancement and implementation of the agenda. A more standardized and regular workshop format would also provide an opportunity for newly elected members of the Security Council to familiarize themselves with the agenda, and meet with key actors in the child protection community ahead of their Council membership.

The workshop builds on previous initiatives from May 2011, February 2013, and December 2013 when the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, Watchlist for Children and Armed Conflict, the Federal Academy for Security Policy, and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs organized, in varying formations, workshops on the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda in Berlin and in Princeton, New Jersey, United States of America. Reports of these workshops have been published as documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/67/794-S/2013/158, A/68/750-S/2014/91). Outstanding key recommendations from those workshops on the implementation and enhancement of the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda are as follows:

Recommendations to the Security Council

- Ensure an adequate child protection mandate, and request timely and sufficient child protection capacity in all relevant Security Council-authorized missions. This includes peacekeeping and special political missions, with a specific focus on monitoring and the reporting of violations, and support for action plan conclusion and implementation
- Incorporate a children and armed conflict dimension in the terms of reference and reports of all Security Council field visits
- Include violations against children as designation criteria in all relevant sanctions committees, and consider options for extending the sanction regimes to other situations of armed conflict involving violations against children
- Subject individuals responsible for such violations to sanctions, and include references to violations against children in the review of narrative summaries issued by sanctions committees
- Invite regularized briefings of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to all relevant sanctions committees.

Recommendations to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

- Make better use of field visits, press conferences, and press statements by the Chair of the Working Group to draw attention to violations against children and to the work of the Working Group
- Request written feedback from all concerned parties on steps taken to implement recommendations contained in Working Group conclusions
- Consider options to increase pressure on persistent perpetrators, by reviewing the use and effectiveness of its toolkit, with a specific focus on which tools have proven or could prove most effective in inducing compliance by different types of perpetrators
- Invite briefings (in-person or via video link) from the relevant Resident Coordinator or Special Representative of the Secretary-General for a given country on the situation in relation to perpetrators, including efforts made and challenges encountered in action plan implementation and conclusion
- Transmit conclusions to the chairs of relevant sanctions committees, and to the International Criminal Court Prosecutor.

Recommendations to Member States

- Mainstream children and armed conflict within foreign ministries and related government agencies, encouraging in particular the use of bilateral diplomacy and conditionality, in development or military assistance, to spur action plan conclusion and implementation
- Establish a "group of friends" at the country level to target action plan conclusion and implementation through bilateral diplomacy
- Support efforts to strengthen national accountability mechanisms, including the development of legislation criminalizing violations against children, and

building investigative and prosecutorial capacities, as well as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes.

Recommendations to the Secretary-General

- Include children and armed conflict as a specific aspect of all country reports as requested by the Security Council in its resolutions 1460 (2003), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), and 1998 (2011)
- Include a section on the impact of the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations in each country-specific report on the situation of children and armed conflict
- Encourage all relevant Resident Coordinators and Special Representatives to prioritize the monitoring and reporting of violations against children, and the conclusion and implementation of action plans
- Ensure timely deployment of an adequate number of child protection advisers in all relevant United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and political missions to support the monitoring and reporting of violations and action plan conclusion and implementation.

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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Comprehensive review of special political missions

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Security Council
Seventieth year

The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Background

1. On 31 October 2014, I commissioned a High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to conduct a comprehensive assessment of United Nations peace operations today and how they can be made more effective, efficient and responsive in a changing world. On 16 June 2015, the Panel delivered its report (A/70/95-S/2015/446). I thank and congratulate President José Ramos-Horta and the rest of the Panel for the excellent report that they have produced, after extensive consultations with Member States, other organizations and civil society groups. The present report constitutes my response to and agenda with which to take forward the recommendations of the Panel.

II. Introduction

2. "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war": the opening words of the Charter capture the purpose of the United Nations. Seventy years later, that objective has never appeared as urgent or as challenging. Since 2008 the number of major violent conflicts has almost tripled. Long-simmering disputes have escalated or relapsed into wars, while new conflicts have emerged in countries and regions

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once considered stable. Labels assigned to conflict, such as "internal", "inter-State", "regional", "ethnic" or "sectarian", have become increasingly irrelevant as transnational forces of violent extremism and organized crime build on and abet local rivalries. Environmental degradation and resource deprivation are not contained by borders. Exclusion at home is driving tension abroad. The number of people displaced by war is approaching 60 million, and global humanitarian needs for 2015 amount to close to $20 billion.

3. Violent crises are drawing unprecedented levels of international engagement. United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations today deploy more than 128,000 people in 39 missions, more than at any time in their history. African and European regional organizations are undertaking crisis management operations across, and on occasion beyond, their continents. Multiple mediators, envoys and observers range the globe. International and national non-governmental organizations are deploying to conflict zones to help to de-escalate and monitor violence. Many of those efforts are contributing to saving lives and to mitigating the impact of violence.

4. However, the proliferation of conflict is outpacing our efforts. Millions of people continue to live in fear and misery. Failure to prevent or halt war in the Syrian Arab Republic, in South Sudan and elsewhere dominates public consciousness. In an era of social media, the horrifying excesses of violent extremism visit our homes daily. Divisions and competition between States are hindering coherent international responses where they are most needed. A profound uncertainty is emerging among our populations over the adequacy of global, regional and national institutions at a time when demands placed on them are greater than ever.

5. Since its founding, the United Nations has worked to prevent, mitigate and resolve violent conflict through a range of actions, from support to human rights and inclusive development to prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and longer-term recovery and reconstruction. Too often, however, efforts have been fragmented and unequal to the task. The limits of our engagement are reflected in United Nations peace operations, the most visible face of the Organization. Over six decades, they have shown a remarkable capacity to adjust to evolving situations and new demands, guided by well-established principles. However, missions are struggling to cope with the spread and intensity of conflicts today, and the lack of unity among Member States over their scope and application is thwarting their adaptation. Within peace operations, the shameful actions of some individuals are tarnishing the efforts of tens of thousands. I am convinced that we can and must do more to tackle such profound challenges.

6. The report of the Panel provides a solid foundation to do so. The Panel considers different environments and tasks that diverse peace operations confront today and offers bold and balanced recommendations to strengthen them. It urges us to restore the search for peaceful political settlement to the centre of United Nations efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and protect civilians. It emphasizes partnerships with regional organizations, host Governments and local communities to achieve this. It calls for the "full spectrum" of peace operations to be used more flexibly, "a continuum of responses and smoother transitions between different phases of missions" enabled by a "field-focused administrative framework". The

Panel stresses the urgent need for new approaches to preventing conflicts and mediating disputes before violence erupts.

7. Those messages are complemented by other reviews before Member States in the coming months. The Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture points to fragmentation that weakens international efforts, and contends that sustaining peace must be a core task of the United Nations. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) examines progress in placing women at the centre of the United Nations peace and security agenda. The upcoming World Humanitarian Report and Summit will focus on the impact of conflict and exclusion on the safety and dignity of the most vulnerable. Later in 2015, I will introduce a plan of action that includes practical measures to prevent violent extremism.

8. There is a collective call for urgent change in how we conceive of our peace and security instruments, how we apply them and how we work together to maximize impact. Drawing on the Panel's recommendations, the present report sets out priorities and the key actions required to bring them about. My action plan centres on three pillars: renewed focus on prevention and mediation; stronger regional-global partnerships; and new ways of planning and conducting United Nations peace operations to make them faster, more responsive and more accountable to the needs of countries and people in conflict. Some actions reflect my long-standing priorities, including the strong preventive focus of my Human Rights Up Front initiative. Others build on lessons, sometimes painful, from efforts to respond to conflict over the past eight years of my tenure. Some steps I have already initiated, while others require longer-term efforts and sustained attention. Together, they represent a comprehensive effort to strengthen United Nations peace operations and the Organization's ability to address conflict.

9. To reflect the Panel's recommendations, and to capture the holistic and tailored way in which United Nations peace and security tools must be used if we are to achieve better and more sustained effect, I use the term "peace operations" throughout the present report. The term refers to all field-based peace and security operations mandated or endorsed by the Security Council and/or the General Assembly, including peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as the envoys and regional offices carrying out my good offices.

III. Priorities for United Nations peace operations in today's world

Pursuit of political settlements

10. The Panel reminds us that a negotiated political settlement is the fundamental objective of United Nations peace operations. The type of political settlement matters. Widespread violations of human rights often trigger a United Nations peace operation, and progress in the protection of those rights is a basis for its exit. The United Nations thus advocates for political settlements that promote peaceful and inclusive societies and help to advance human rights. This is not a lofty ideal; it makes hard practical sense, and is at the heart of the operational aspects of Human Rights Up Front. Societies with effective, inclusive and accountable institutions are more likely to withstand crises and peacefully manage disputes. Communities that recognize the dignity of each individual stand less chance of fuelling resentments that can manifest in extremism.

11. Political solutions to conflict rest, ultimately, on a country's people and leaders. Effective conflict response, as the Panel notes, needs to take account of national and local priorities and needs. It must be directed at building domestic capacity to protect and strengthen inclusive peace. However, we must be honest about the challenges that this involves. Countries in conflict are de facto divided communities, reflecting a breakdown of consensus about which priorities and whose needs matter. Finding solutions may mean bringing in multiple voices and competing claims. It must mean that the United Nations speaks to all parties and all those exerting influence on them.

12. The ability of United Nations missions to engage all partners in crafting and maintaining political solutions is determined by their political weight. Peace operations do not deploy without significant international backing. However, support is not always sustained or accompanied by coordinated pressure on warring parties or those assisting them. In Darfur, United Nations peacekeepers work in a vacuum of political negotiations. In the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, my Envoys search for ways to initiate political processes, even as Member States and regional actors reinforce military and financial support to opposing sides. I fully endorse the Panel's call for the Security Council to bring its collective political leverage to bear on behalf of political solutions.

13. Many of our missions grapple today with the consequences of political failure and the preference for quick fixes. In many cases, international efforts reproduce earlier formulas for conflict resolution: disarmament, elections, infrastructure and institutions, which are critical for a country's recovery, as seen in Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. However, they must be built on political foundations and result in mechanisms that can accommodate diversity and differences. Technical interventions alone cannot replace the difficult task of assisting parties in finding political solutions.

14. The Panel's call to place the search for political solutions at the heart of United Nations peace operations means that our engagement must be designed and implemented in ways that help conflict parties to arrive at and sustain a political settlement. Where short-term prospects are limited and support from parties, particularly the host State, for a United Nations peace operation is partial or wavering, I will provide frank assessments and recommendations to the Security Council as to what peace operations can be reasonably requested to deliver and where priorities should lie.

15. Political efforts must be backed by firm resolve, including, where required, the use of force. As we learned in Côte d'Ivoire, this can be essential to deterring and responding to violence against a political process. In some cases, the Security Council may request a United Nations peace operation to undertake specific and clearly delineated enforcement tasks in support of a political settlement that has broad international and domestic backing. However, a United Nations peace operation is not designed or equipped to impose political solutions through sustained use of force. It does not pursue military victory. As the Panel rightly recognizes, United Nations peace operations are not the appropriate tool for military counter-terrorism operations. They do deploy in violent and asymmetric threat environments, however, and must be capable of operating effectively and as safely as possible therein. In situations of grave risk to civilians, peace operations must be able to respond promptly and capably. Troop and police contributors should commit

to and be ready to meet these requirements in operations with Chapter VII mandates. They must know and be consulted from the start on what will be expected of them and the responsibilities and risks entailed.

Protection of civilians

16. I am proud of the progress that we have made in putting human rights at the centre of our peace and security efforts. They are an integral component of every United Nations peace operation and a core consideration for United Nations development and humanitarian activities. We have improved our ability to assess the potential of disputes turning violent and to draw the attention of national Governments and the Security Council to human rights violations. The success of such efforts relies on working closely with local communities and non-governmental organizations with deep knowledge of challenges and opportunities to advance people's rights.

17. All United Nations peace operations today have the obligation to advocate the protection of civilians. This is a mission-wide task. Many non-military tools are available, including strong political advocacy, credible reporting and liaison with communities. Many missions support national authorities in carrying out their protection responsibilities, including through support to police, rule of law and security institutions and national action plans to better protect children and address sexual violence. I have directed that mission-wide strategies and coherent monitoring and reporting arrangements be put in place to reinforce the collective impact of critical protection activities.

18. Where missions have an explicit mandate to protect civilians, uniformed personnel must play their part, including, where necessary, through the use of force. This has been defined to mean preventive, pre-emptive and tactical use of force to protect civilians under threat of physical violence. The source and the nature of violence are not the determinant for action. Guns, machetes, rape, improvised explosives: these and more are used against civilians by all manner of armed actors. Missions must have the capabilities and command structures required to respond effectively, and uniformed personnel must comply with orders to prevent, deter and protect civilians against attacks.

19. Improvements made over the past 15 years to policies, rules of engagement and training are helping missions to protect civilians. However, as the Panel argued, wide and universal participation in missions is also vital to their effectiveness and credibility. Within Member States lie capabilities that can improve mission presence on the ground, risk assessments, communication, mobility and engineering. I call upon all Member States to contribute to peace operations by providing practical and political support.

20. I reaffirm my commitment to informing the Security Council of situations of escalating risk to civilians or serious shortfalls in the capability of missions to fulfil protection mandates. I stand ready to provide regular briefings to the Council on high-risk situations. I will investigate and inform the Council and Member States of any incident in which a mission, military unit or police contingent fails to act. In turn, I call upon the Council to respond actively and consistently to my requests for political and operational support, particularly in contexts where State parties are involved in attacks against civilians.

Tailored and appropriate responses

21. Peace operations offer a unique platform to draw together a wide range of United Nations capacities, serve as catalysts for bilateral and non-governmental attention and facilitate actions by United Nations and non-United Nations partners. This may be their greatest potential to address today's complex crises, but we are failing to fully realize it.

22. One reason is our well-meaning attempt to neatly characterize conflicts and develop specific tools for each. However, conflicts rarely comply with categories. Violence erupts and subsides, stalemates persist for years, and lapses and relapses occur. Rebel groups may use terrorist tactics; national forces may prey on the populations that they exist to protect. An effective peace operation must be able to look ahead and constantly adjust its response using all United Nations instruments.

23. Similarly, we continue to frame mission mandates and postures in national terms, when the transnational nature of today's conflicts threatens entire regions. Transforming peace operations into instruments that can address the regional dimensions of conflict requires a change in mindset across the Organization.

24. Today, as the Panel notes, more than half of United Nations Secretariat staff work in field operations, yet our administrative and financial policies and procedures, as well as intergovernmental processes, are not systematically configured to support dynamic field environments. As Secretary-General, I have tackled that disconnect. The establishment of the Department of Field Support was designed to accelerate our ability to deliver rapidly and effectively. That work needs to be completed. With the support of Member States, much can be done to design more appropriate responses, accelerate deployment, better prepare our personnel, adapt support to field conditions and needs and empower missions to make operational decisions in a timely manner.

25. A number of initiatives are under way to help to improve the global management of the Organization, including Umoja, the introduction of a career development and mobility framework and forthcoming proposals for a global service delivery model. I am committed to ensuring that those initiatives meet field needs. In the following section, I set out additional steps to better craft and tailor United Nations peace operations.

Accountability

26. A United Nations peace operation must reflect the values that it promotes. If we are not capable of interacting with our hosts, their citizens and their resources with respect, our actions will have little consequence. Strong leadership and accountability are essential. As the Panel emphasizes, a single act of misconduct can undermine the support of local populations and sully the international reputation of the United Nations. It is essential that United Nations personnel, both civilian and military, conduct themselves in a manner consistent with our values. The human rights record and performance of contributing countries is an integral part of this.

27. Sexual exploitation and abuse by a small minority of United Nations personnel continues to shame our Organization. Such abuse scars the lives of men, women and children. It is one of my greatest disappointments. I will continue to do everything within my authority to stamp out this scourge, and I set out below the additional steps that I am taking to do so. Member States must also assume their

responsibilities. The Security Council must signal the importance that it assigns to high standards of accountability, and contributors must ensure that allegations of misconduct are investigated promptly and criminal accountability is enforced.

Global-regional partnerships

28. The Panel's call for stronger global-regional partnerships is central to effective international peace and security engagements. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides the foundation, but its operationalization depends on our collective will and ability to put in place predictable and efficient responses from diverse partners. We have made significant progress over the past 15 years: cooperation frameworks have been instituted between the United Nations and the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and regular secretariat-to-secretariat dialogue is held with a similar set of partners.

29. The structures, mandates and operations of our regional partners vary widely. Our interests and approaches sometimes differ. Our roles also vary. Sometimes the United Nations is called to convene and lead a peace and security response. Other times, it supports and enables the actions of others. A pragmatic and case-by-case approach is needed, starting with early communication and procedures for crisis consultation.

30. We also need to move away from improvisation in how we work together. Political strategies are left unaddressed at times or not pursued and coordinated consistently. People, troops, police, equipment and capabilities and support cooperation are generated and negotiated anew by each organization. We must build on our experience to establish standing arrangements and procedures that can be applied flexibly when operations are sequenced or parallel and support collaboration when the United Nations and regional organizations engage in the same mediation processes.

31. In situations of major conflict and mass violations of human rights, as the Panel notes, national, multinational and regional responses are often faster to deploy and more capable of combating well-equipped and determined belligerents. I welcome African Union efforts to fully operationalize the African Standby Force and the commitment by the European Union to engaging European Union Battlegroups, where appropriate, for crisis management. I intend to explore with those key partners how said capacities may serve as bridging forces pending the mobilization and deployment of a United Nations mission.

32. The international peace and security responsibilities shouldered by the African Union and regional economic communities and regional mechanisms in Africa have grown enormously in recent years. They represent a significant human and financial burden for African countries. We need to look for ways to share that burden. I am committed to strengthening arrangements that enable effective delivery by the African Union for our collective benefit and, where United Nations peace operations deploy alongside or after African Union missions, to reinforcing the political and operational benefits of cooperation.

Renewed focus on prevention and mediation

33. Ultimately, we cannot respond to the number and intensity of today's crises by focusing only on conflict management. Prevention and mediation must return to the fore, a point also made by the Panel. The strengthening of United Nations prevention and mediation efforts, including envoys, regional offices, standing Headquarters capacity for good offices, standby mediation experts and support to United Nations country teams, has been one of my priorities. Mediation support capacity, for example, enabled more than 100 mediation advisers to deploy in 2014 in order to assist United Nations efforts or those of our partners to find political solutions.

34. At the rhetorical level, there is strong support for early warning and conflict prevention. However, this is not always translated into early action. Member States, which have the primary responsibility for preventing conflict, are often reluctant to attract a global spotlight on disputes at home and in their neighbourhood. The Security Council has at times been hesitant to consider crises at an early stage. The good offices of the Secretary-General have proven to be a powerful preventive tool. However, even discreet engagement, through dialogue and facilitation, human rights monitoring, expert teams and capacity-building, requires political support to be effective. When we engage too late or with insufficient support, our tools may no longer be sufficient to prevent violence, and they are then wrongly blamed for failing.

35. It is time to fulfil our commitment to prevention as the core function of the Organization. Strong Member State political support for United Nations prevention and mediation efforts can send a powerful signal that the global system is intent on reducing armed conflict. It can build confidence in the capacity of international organizations to advance peace. I set out below concrete steps that I believe are essential to expanding the range of United Nations capacities to tackle crises before they become conflicts that we struggle to resolve.

IV. Implementing our priorities: an agenda for action

36. The present section sets out a near-term agenda to make United Nations peace operations fit for purpose, which I am acutely aware will extend beyond my tenure. I focus on steps that are being or can be taken forward in 2016, while offering thoughts on those actions to be considered by my successor and Member States.

A. Strengthening the range of United Nations responses: capacities for conflict prevention and mediation

37. Strengthening United Nations tools to prevent and mediate crises is helping to create faster and more cost-effective responses to conflict, yet successful early action, such as in Guinea, has failed to ignite political urgency for prevention. It is time we invest in making our tools more predictable and effective. I fully endorse the Panel's call for a significant strengthening of and more reliable resourcing through the regular budget for the Secretariat's core prevention and mediation capacities.

38. One of the most powerful prevention tools is the Security Council's early engagement. Where united and resolute, the Council can bring important political and other resources to bear on a deteriorating situation. I will continue to explore different ways to bring the Council's attention to such situations, including informal briefings and discussions and continued use of the "any other business" agenda item in informal consultations. In other contexts, however, discreet approaches stand a greater chance of success. I will elaborate further on those in my forthcoming report to the Council on conflict prevention.

Regional offices

39. Regional offices have become one of the most effective operational tools of the United Nations in helping to defuse tensions and supporting national actors in reaching political settlements. As the recent engagement of the United Nations Office for West Africa in Burkina Faso, in partnership with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, demonstrates, they work with national actors, United Nations country teams, missions and regional partners to act early in a crisis and put in place joined-up responses. In West and Central Africa, as well as in Central Asia, they also contribute to developing collective responses to a range of longer-term transnational challenges, from organized crime to managing scarce natural resources. In addition, such offices are cost-effective: their annual budgets range from $3 million to $10 million.

40. Given the unique role that regional offices play, I strongly support the Panel's call for the establishment of additional such offices where they might be of benefit. I am exploring with regional and national partners in North Africa and West Asia, as well as in Southern Africa, the establishment of such offices in those regions. As a crucial operational arm of the Organization's core prevention mandate, regional offices should be resourced accordingly.

Strengthening preventive capacities of United Nations country teams

41. United Nations development actors play a critical role in drawing the attention of the United Nations to a deteriorating situation. They are often the first to face a burgeoning political crisis, and they support national counterparts in identifying risks to development and develop strategies to address them. In recent years we have made good progress in reinforcing their capacity, including through the deployment of peace and development advisers, human rights advisers and mediation expertise. We have also reinforced the capacities of resident coordinators in such situations.

42. The adoption of the sustainable development goals, notably goal 16, on peaceful and inclusive societies, offers a tremendous opportunity to strengthen collaboration between development and peace and security actors. In my capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, I intend to engage leaders of the United Nations system organizations at upcoming Board sessions on how the United Nations system can be brought together to strengthen preventive and peacebuilding work. I have also requested the United Nations Development Group to take forward a review of current capacities of agencies, funds and programmes, which will feed into those and subsequent discussions.

Human Rights Up Front

43. My Human Rights Up Front initiative is another step to prioritize and reinforce system-wide prevention efforts. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to identify earlier signs of serious human rights abuses and potential conflict and enable proactive and more effective responses that draw on all United Nations tools. I am pleased at the Panel's strong endorsement of the initiative and will continue to strengthen it, including by institutionalizing regular reviews of high-risk situations by senior managers. Such reviews will ensure that United Nations action in the field is early, informed and driven by human rights priorities.

Early action through "light teams"

44. In situations of crisis or mission transition or when the United Nations in-country representative and presence require enhanced support, "light teams" of experts can help to bring together United Nations development, human rights and peace and security activities to craft a tailored approach to a specific situation. Operating under my good offices, these small, flexible and time-limited teams can deploy early and at low cost to work discreetly, under or in close consultation with resident coordinators, as appropriate, and national authorities to assess the situation, support national processes and facilitate engagement with partners. I appreciate the Panel's endorsement of this important concept and will continue to make use of it when appropriate.

B. Reinforced global-regional partnerships

45. The establishment of effective global-regional partnerships will be a critical undertaking for Member States, regional partners and the United Nations in coming years. My report concerning cooperation between the United Nations and regional partners on mediation (A/70/328) reflects our experiences to date and how we can strengthen collective efforts.

46. Over the next year I intend to further institutionalize cooperation with those regional partners with which we work particularly closely, so as to enable consultation, common early warning and conflict analysis, and coordinated responses to the specific dynamics and needs of each region. With the European Union, we will fully implement agreed priorities to further strengthen our strong strategic partnership for 2015-2018. I share the Panel's view that United Nations cooperation with the League of Arab States should be further strengthened, and our two secretariats are exploring the potential deployment of a small United Nations liaison presence.

The African Union as a key partner

47. With most United Nations peace operations in Africa, significant African Union peace operations under way and common mediation efforts across the continent, the African Union is the key regional partner of the United Nations. Our cooperation is underpinned by principles that apply to other regional partners, including consultative decision-making and appropriate common strategies for an integrated response to conflict, based on respective comparative advantage, transparency, accountability and respect for international norms and standards. The

United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission are taking steps to finalize, in 2016, a Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which will provide a blueprint for early and continuous engagement between our organizations before, during and after conflict and with a view to finding political solutions to the crises that we face. Principles of the Framework underpin the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union and the Peace and Security Department of the African Union, and the Framework has demonstrated the value of collaborative approaches.

48. If the United Nations is to fulfil its commitment to partnership with the African Union, we need to optimize the full range of potential support modalities, which may include a combination of voluntary, assessed and bilateral support. I concur with the Panel's call for sustained, predictable and flexible funding mechanisms to support African Union peace operations. In that regard, I commend the African Union's commitment to self-reliance, including to financing 25 per cent of future African Union peace operations. I urge Member States to give urgent consideration to how the United Nations can respond to that initiative. In support thereof, and further to my letter dated 2 January 2015 to the President of the Council (S/2015/3), I have requested the Secretariat to carry out, jointly with the African Union and in consultation with other partners, a review and assessment of various mechanisms currently available to finance and support African Union peace operations authorized by the Council. The review will be informed by the results of the recent strategic review of the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia.

49. I recognize, as does the African Union, that any financing provided by the United Nations will depend on institutional capability to effectively plan, deploy and conduct peace operations and will be contingent on compliance with United Nations norms, standards and financial rules and regulations. Recent reform and restructuring initiatives of the African Union Commission are laying the foundations for more effective institutional processes. We are supporting a major effort by the Commission to identify an effective mission support concept for the African Union and the capacities needed to implement it. As part of that, we are exploring how the African Union could gain access to United Nations system contracts. In the meantime, we will ensure that the strategic deployment stocks of the United Nations remain available as a mechanism to provide the African Union with ready access to the goods and services required to establish and maintain its operations.

50. The United Nations will continue to provide technical and planning expertise to assist the African Union in conflict prevention, mediation, military and police planning, financial and logistics management, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and mine action. We will also continue to support the African Union's commitment to integrating human rights in its operations and to ensure that international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law standards are adhered to by forces deployed by the African Union so as to facilitate United Nations support in line with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. Specific areas of work that we have agreed to support include predeployment training, monitoring and oversight mechanisms and screening of personnel.

51. I fully anticipate that United Nations and African Union peace operations will continue to deploy in sequence or in parallel in coming years. It is incumbent upon

us to institutionalize consultative processes and, where appropriate, joint mechanisms. We have agreed to develop, by early 2016, a shared vision for benchmarks to guide transitions from African Union to United Nations operations, drawing on lessons from the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia. We have also agreed to initiate joint work on standardizing the process of rehatting uniformed personnel from African Union to United Nations operations, which will address, inter alia, training, equipment, sustainment and performance standards, conduct and accountability, and logistics support requirements.

C. Tailored peace operations

52. The demands, impact and cost of today's peace operations require comprehensive strengthening of the ways in which we plan and conduct operations. The call for tailored peace operations that can respond effectively across the lifetime of a conflict is one of the Panel's recommendations that I will prioritize.

Analysis and planning

53. I fully endorse the Panel's view, echoed by the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, that conflict analysis should systematically include considerations of human rights and threats to civilians, as well as the political, security, social, economic, gender and regional dimensions of a conflict. To that end, over the next six months, existing conflict analysis methodologies will be revised and new guidelines issued to enable systematic application of joined-up conflict analysis, as well as to strengthen and institutionalize the system-wide analysis and response mechanisms — the regional quarterly review and the Senior Action Group — set up under my Human Rights Up Front initiative.

54. The United Nations has a system-wide policy on integrated assessment and planning that provides a good basis for planning in contexts of peace operations. It needs to be consistently implemented and continually refined. As recommended by the Panel, and to support a strategic and coherent approach to United Nations conflict response from the earliest stage, I am establishing a small centralized analysis and planning capacity in my office within existing resources. That entity will draw on and compile information and analysis across the system to prepare strategic considerations and options for possible United Nations responses. It will translate my guidance into strategic directives that set out overall parameters for potential United Nations engagement, trigger strategic assessments where required and designate roles and responsibilities, including the lead department. The small capacity will also serve to ensure that integrated planning complies with my strategic directives and relevant planning policies across an operation's lifetime.

55. Lead departments are responsible for taking forward integrated strategic assessments and planning processes. An empowered planner, working from the lead department and with planners across the system, will develop coherent and prioritized strategic plans. The Secretariat is compiling a list of senior planners, drawing on capacities within and outside the system. I also agree with the Panel's recommendation to transfer responsibility for operational mission planning, as soon as feasible, to the field. Missions will be responsible for the preparation of mission and component operational plans that are coherent, interoperable and tailored to

their operating environment. Lead departments at Headquarters will be responsible for review and approval, after assessing whether operational plans reflect strategic planning directives, are joined-up and reflect available resources. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have already begun to jointly approve military, police and support concepts.

56. Effective planning also requires capable and multidisciplinary planners. I am committed to enhancing training in conflict analysis and assessments, as well as strategic and operational planning, so that United Nations personnel are equipped to work capably together. I call upon Member States to support those efforts.

Sequenced mandates

57. Quality analysis allows me to provide the Council with frank and well-considered advice that it needs in assessing options to respond to crisis. The decision to launch a peace operation, therefore, must be made in the context of sustained dialogue on emerging priorities and how the United Nations can address them. I support the Panel's suggestion that the Council consider how it can better prioritize and sequence tasks that it sets for peace operations. Some recent Council mandates have taken welcome steps in that direction.

58. On the basis of clear political objectives, the Council may decide to establish an initial mandate and request me to return after a defined period with more comprehensive proposals for prioritized mission tasks, including assessment of the military, police, substantive and support capabilities required for implementation and options for rapid generation and deployment.

59. Where a significant presence is immediately required, for example in situations characterized by urgent protection needs, the Council may initially restrict the mandate to political, security and protection tasks, with the understanding that any further tasks are contingent on progress on the most immediate threats to civilians. In such cases, my reports would include a regular assessment of the mission's political and protection effect, the extent to which the mission has the capabilities to fulfil its protection mandate and the additional political and practical support required. Such reports would also track progress towards a political process and identify options for changes to the mission's strategy and mandate where progress is not forthcoming. When political openings occur, I would identify priority actions that a mission can take to support and advance them.

60. A benefit of sequenced approaches, in addition to better use of limited resources and better risk management, is that they enable United Nations peace operations to consult early with national and regional stakeholders in the design and delivery of mandated tasks. Sequencing also allows the Council greater potential to engage host States and regional partners on expectations and commitments. I welcome an early opportunity to discuss such options with the Council.

Dialogue between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop and police contributors

61. Sustained dialogue between the Council, the Secretariat and contributors is essential for shared understanding of appropriate responses and their implications for the mandate and conduct of a peace operation. That dialogue should begin before the mission is established. One option that could be considered is for the

Secretariat to brief potential contributors together with Council members on its assessment of a conflict before an operation is authorized. This could serve to alert potential contributors and allow them to consider what capabilities might be required. It would also give the Council an opportunity to obtain insights on the challenges and opportunities involved in mandating certain tasks and in generating the required capabilities under specific time frames.

62. As the Council moves closer to authorizing or changing the mandate of an operation, a subsequent set of triangular consultations could be held to ensure clarity on planned priorities, operational implications and required capabilities. Such discussions would accompany ongoing memorandum of understanding negotiations between individual contributors and the Secretariat. To ensure full clarity on our mutual commitments, I have instructed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to include in each memorandum of understanding the relevant statement of unit requirements, which details the capabilities and standards to be provided and tasks to be undertaken.

63. Once the mandate of a peace operation is established, the Secretariat will regularly brief contributors and seek their views in assessing progress. It is incumbent upon us to immediately explain any changes or requirements that have implications for troops and police.

Engaging on national priorities and building support for action

64. Consent of national authorities is the basis for United Nations engagement in a country. I intend to explore with relevant host Governments the establishment of compacts as a way to ensure understanding of our mandates and status-of-mission agreements and, as appropriate, support coordinated international engagement. However, the support of local populations is essential for effective action. United Nations peace operations must foster public support immediately on deployment, and strategic communication and community engagement are essential. Where security conditions permit, peace operations will recruit national staff and community liaison officers, particularly women, from the outset. Public opinion surveys undertaken by many peace operations are a valuable means of regularly assessing progress and evolving community priorities. I have instructed that they be conducted regularly.

Delivering coherent responses

65. Once Security Council and national priorities are defined, my priority is the delivery of coherent United Nations responses. Integrated approaches allow us to create new ways of working together and enable specialist support to be provided from across the system. They are potentially more cost-effective where participating mission components and agencies co-locate staff, share services and put in place cost-sharing arrangements. I intend to accelerate the establishment of platforms for coordinated work in cross-cutting areas. The Global Focal Point for the Police, Justice and Corrections brings together the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and others to provide joint support in the areas of the rule of law and human rights in 19 countries with peace operations, as well as in other conflict and post-conflict settings. I intend to enhance

that arrangement by strengthening its capacity for joint programme design and implementation.

66. Protection functions will also benefit from a more coherent framework of support to deliver greater impact. Beginning with careful and considered outreach to communities at the local level and extending to strong mission information management that informs action and feeds into protection responses, and reporting to the Council, a shared platform will strengthen response, monitoring and the coherence of multiple reporting functions, including for children and armed conflict and conflict-related sexual violence. Going forward, all peace operations with a protection of civilians mandate should have a senior protection of civilians adviser, located in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to coordinate the development of mission-wide strategies and guidance for all components, in liaison with relevant protection actors, including the humanitarian protection cluster. With due consideration for the requirements of flexibility to respond to differing contexts, a dedicated capacity for specialized protection functions relating to child protection and conflict-related sexual violence will be consolidated within mission human rights components. The head of the component will be responsible, through the head of mission, for the implementation of those specialized mandates and ensure that the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and on Sexual Violence in Conflict have the engagement, information and support required for the delivery of their respective mandates.

67. Coherent mechanisms to support women's full participation in peace and security are vital. Building on the successful pilot in Haiti, I have decided to henceforth request that the Senior Gender Adviser of United Nations peace operations be located in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, supported by gender expertise embedded in functional mission components. I am pleased that UN-Women, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs are putting in place arrangements to strengthen the provision of substantive and technical support to missions and to make full use of respective comparative advantages. My forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) details collective efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda.

68. Jobs and livelihoods are another key concern for communities and one in which United Nations agencies and others have comparative advantages. Collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank has been increasing, and the two organizations have a shared set of partnership objectives. To strengthen cooperation across security and justice sectors, core government functions and employment, I have instructed my senior management to propose a mechanism that brings together the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and key regional banks to engage coherently in crisis countries.

69. I welcome the call by both the Panel and the Advisory Group of Experts to address shortfalls in financing the different activities needed to achieve and sustain peace. Efforts to deliver programmes demanded more frequently by Security Council mandates have been limited to an extension of the traditional resourcing model. Nevertheless, constructive options to apply available resources in enlisting partners to support mandate delivery exist. In that context, I am taking steps to ensure that forthcoming mission budget requests include the full range of resources

required to implement mandates and that missions closely coordinate with the United Nations country teams in that work. We also need to look at how pooled country-level funds can support the delivery of coordinated support in cross-cutting areas and help to manage often volatile aid allocations.

70. My Peacebuilding Fund has become a proven instrument to assist with rapid, coherent and risk-tolerant funding that yields impact in sensitive political environments. It urgently needs additional resources to continue operations at the current level of $100 million per year. Going forward, I will actively explore, in close consultation with Member States and through appropriate intergovernmental bodies, options to provide predictable resources for the Fund. I intend to bring persistent financing gaps to the attention of the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Assessing impact and transitioning

71. Regular assessment of mission progress enables operations to adapt their responses to a fast-evolving environment. While significant steps have been taken to establish integrated field assessments, the tools required to do so remain incomplete. Progress is often as complex to measure as it is to obtain. Better impact assessment could facilitate realistic benchmarks for missions, and a more results-focused formulation of budgets could better inform regular assessment and resource management.

72. Periodic independent evaluations could complement a more impact-focused approach. I am mindful that a myriad of routine and ad hoc assessments are undertaken by multiple Headquarters entities. I have instructed the streamlining of reviews to permit more systematic independent evaluations and will provide details in my forthcoming report on the overview of the financing of peacekeeping operations.

73. Ongoing analysis and impact measurement are equally essential to the successful transition of peace operations. They must be undertaken with national and United Nations partners that may take on and advance work initially carried out by peace operations. They should incorporate the assessment of capacities and resources of those actors. Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia will be early cases for that approach, building on effective transitions in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. Sustained political engagement after transitions is also essential. The Peacebuilding Commission, as well as regional organizations and regional offices, holds significant potential and can play a valuable role in that regard.

Financing and structures

74. Some of the existing financing arrangements applicable to the Secretariat are an obstacle to tailored peace operations and present challenges and cost inefficiencies with regard to efforts to draw on all tools available to the Organization. My report on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/340), which remains before the General Assembly for its consideration, presents options that address many of the obstacles to tailored peace operations. I support the Panel's call to Member States to take immediate action on this critical issue. A tailored and coherent approach to peace operations will also require overcoming current hurdles to providing specialist support to field missions, whether human rights, mediation or electoral

assistance to peacekeeping missions and military advice or rule of law support to special political missions.

75. As the Panel observes, the structure of the Secretariat may itself also present a challenge to a more coherent approach. Structures, in and of themselves, will not solve problems of coherence, speed and efficiency, but they can help to reduce inefficiency and support cooperation in planning and deploying peace operations. The Panel's recommendation to restructure the Secretariat's peace and security architecture will require a more comprehensive consideration that I will encourage my successor to undertake. Secretariat restructuring will be a necessary but insufficient condition to realize a tailored approach to peace operations and better calibrated responses to conflict.

D. Agile field support

Empowering the field

76. Tailored peace operations will remain an elusive goal unless we change the way in which we support missions. The current administrative framework for peace operations is often slow, cumbersome and averse to risk. The average length of time to recruit and deploy rostered civilian staff to a peace operation is 180 days, 120 of which are required to complete reference checks, medical clearance and travel to the duty station. At least 20 distinct steps are involved in engaging and deploying uniformed personnel, requiring the coordination of four different divisions within three separate departments. Current processes, when applied to volatile, poorly resourced and often remote environments, are proving ineffective. A collective change of culture, policies and approaches is needed.

77. We must look to best global practice in the administration of field-based organizations. That approach, practiced in most of our countries, is directed at aligning authorities and accountability with responsibilities. I intend to further empower field missions so that they can carry out their responsibilities and utilize resources effectively and accountably.

78. All United Nations managers must demonstrate responsible stewardship of funds and resources entrusted to the Organization. Increased authority of field managers will be accompanied, therefore, by strong efforts to strengthen mission management capabilities. I will hold managers accountable and will establish clear chains of command and guidance on the exercise of authorities. Accountability arrangements will include clear reporting requirements, efficient monitoring and support, and regular assessment of performance, as well as corrective action to support enhanced authority and decision-making responsibilities.

79. A tailored peace operation requires a dynamic workforce that can be adapted and resized to meet specific needs at any given time. The Organization should be able to quickly recruit and deploy qualified individuals under the most appropriate contractual modalities, discipline them for cause and terminate them if they are no longer required for the mandate or context. This is not possible under current arrangements. The recruitment of National Professional Officers is subject to the same criteria as that of international staff even in countries emerging from prolonged conflict, where conditions have not allowed them to meet those criteria. I intend to complete a review of the key processes that may not be supportive of our

field operations by September 2016 and have requested a broader review of Secretariat policies and procedures, to be completed by September 2017.

80. I am committed to ensuring that field perspectives and needs are reflected in administrative policies and procedures. To that end, I am instituting formalized internal consultative mechanisms and representative field participation to ensure that policies and procedures are applicable to all Secretariat staff, including those working in the field, and that, where required, relevant field-specific arrangements are established.

Standing administrative measures for start-ups and emergencies

81. I am putting in place, by the end of 2015, standing administrative measures for start-up and crisis situations to go into effect for six months on a renewable basis upon the establishment of a peace operation or my certification of a crisis or emergency. Those measures include some exceptional measures approved in such situations as the Ebola crisis response, the Haiti earthquake of 2010 and more recent mission start-ups. Other obstacles to rapid and predictable response, such as the three-month limit on temporary duty assignments of personnel from Headquarters, were established through decisions of the General Assembly. As those impediments constrain the effective use of United Nations personnel surge support, I intend to present proposals to the Assembly in the context of my forthcoming report on the overview of the financing of peacekeeping operations.

Rapidly deployable headquarters

82. The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will finalize, by early 2016, a concept and standard operating procedures for a rapidly deployable integrated civilian, military and police headquarters capacity that can be fully functional within 8 to 12 weeks of the issuance of a mandate. This will build on prior efforts, including by incorporating standardized designs, the use of strategic deployment stocks and modular solutions, standard operating procedures to facilitate the fast-track deployment of civilian, military and police personnel, and standby arrangements for the construction and sustainment of integrated headquarters and other mission components.

Specialized support packages

83. Force and police generation will remain the main vehicle to generate uniformed capabilities for peace operations. However, in start-up or emergency situations or when there are particularly challenging environments to navigate, a broader range of support options will need consideration. Logistics capabilities located elsewhere in the system, such as in the United Nations Office for Project Services, can provide important enablers, and I will continue to draw on established arrangements that provide for their rapid engagement.

84. I will also invite regional partners and Member States that have capabilities in key enabling areas to propose and provide specialist support packages to address specific substantive and support needs, particularly for short-duration tasks to address urgent field requirements or temporary gaps. They include engineering capabilities for infrastructure construction; immediate medical facilities and medical evacuation solutions; and strategic airlift support.

E. Speed, capabilities and performance of uniformed capabilities

85. The timely deployment and the effective performance of uniformed capabilities are where partnership between troop and police contributors and the Secretariat stands or fails. To improve the consistency and coordination of capability development initiatives, I intend to establish, with interested Member States, a single capability and performance framework for uniformed personnel. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has a unique contribution to make to that work.

Rapid deployment of uniformed capabilities

86. The Panel made a number of important recommendations to accelerate military and police deployment to peace operations, all of which I am pursuing. A small Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell has been established, through extrabudgetary resources, to engage current and potential troop and police contributors on a more timely and sustained basis on required capabilities, including female personnel. The Cell also manages the new Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, which replaced the previous Standby Arrangements System. I will propose the institutionalization of that important function in my forthcoming request under the support account for peacekeeping operations.

87. The case for rapidly available capacity is incontestable. The political commitment and financial incentives to realize it, however, have been decades-long obstacles. Building on past experience, I am establishing three complementary rapidly deployable capacities that, with Member State support, can provide the basis for timely response when needed. All will draw on the integrated mission headquarters noted above. First, the Secretariat is developing requirements for standby units for a range of capabilities and will invite Member States and regional organizations to establish arrangements that could enable those capabilities to be drawn on under defined conditions and during defined time periods. Those standby capabilities will become part of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and provide the backbone to early deployment.

88. Second, I will continue to explore arrangements for the rapid and time-bound transfer of assets and capabilities from existing missions to meet crises or start-up needs. While such inter-mission cooperation arrangements are not a substitute for properly resourced missions, they provide the means to respond quickly to changing circumstances, as during the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and the elections in Liberia. The quick reaction force subsequently deployed in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire has significant potential to support nearby peace operations. I intend to build on that innovation and explore similar capacities in other regions, where authorized by the Council.

89. Third, pre-established arrangements between Member States, regional organizations and the Secretariat for strategic deployment capacity and the provision of key enablers are an emerging means of assisting faster deployment to start-up or crisis situations. We will continue to engage interested and capable Member States for the provision of national enabling capabilities through stand-alone agreements and the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.

90. A longer-term option is the small United Nations "vanguard capability" for mission start-ups or reinforcement, as proposed by the Panel, an intriguing concept to establish standby regional strategic reserve contingents that could deploy from a regional hub and be self-sustaining for up to 180 days. I have instructed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to explore the concept further for discussion with Member States.

Uniformed capability development and performance

91. High-tempo environments call for a broader range of capabilities, including specialist functions, and a high degree of operational readiness. In asking contributors to do more, the Security Council and the Secretariat must also do more to support contributors in meeting capability and performance requirements.

92. Progress has been made, in cooperation with Member States, in establishing clear military unit standards and capabilities for most types of military units. Increasingly customized and precise unit requirements are being detailed for each peace operation. Such steps are facilitating triangular capacity-building initiatives between the Secretariat, troop contributors and countries with specific specialist capabilities. I welcome such initiatives and invite other Member States with the requisite skills and capacity to support similar developments of other specialist enabling capabilities, such as medical and signals units.

93. Development of police capabilities requires a similar concerted effort. The central pillars of the police strategic guidance framework will be in place by the end of 2015 and will provide a sound basis for cooperation between Member States and the Secretariat on the articulation of standards, tasks and training requirements of formed police units, specialized teams and individual police officers. Guidance and new modalities for planning and recruitment will be critical to improving coherence and interoperability. To support that effort, I have instructed the Police Division to undertake an external review of functions, structure and capacity and to present the results in my forthcoming report on United Nations policing.

94. New capabilities will continue to be required for United Nations peace operations. An effective system for the acquisition, analysis and operationalization of information for peace operations in complex environments is lacking. I have tasked the Secretariat with developing parameters for an information and intelligence framework that can support field missions in operating effectively and safely. I welcome further discussions with Member States on that urgent capability gap.

95. We must continue to work together to respond to the need for greater mobility in field operations. Operational effectiveness in high-tempo contexts, including the ability to protect civilians, requires proactive and forward-leaning postures, as well as flexible support mechanisms. I have directed the Secretariat to undertake a comprehensive review of issues related to in-mission mobility, as well as command and control of military enabling assets, by the second quarter of 2016.

96. The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will consult with Member States to propose revisions of accommodation definitions and standards to focus on the provision of high-quality adaptable solutions that ensure acceptable living conditions for short- and long-term deployments while providing the mobility necessary to adapt to dynamic mission

requirements, in advance of the meeting of the Working Group on Reimbursement of Contingent-Owned Equipment to be held in 2017.

97. All of the steps above are intended to ensure effective performance in the field, whose measurement requires clear performance standards. Building on the recent development of an operational readiness assurance framework, the proposed capability and performance framework should take forward their development. While predeployment preparations, supported by Secretariat visits, remain critical to ensuring operational readiness, regular assessments of units and equipment should also be conducted in missions. Such assessments would allow early identification of deficiencies, including as a result of operating in austere environments, enable contributors to be alerted and quickly address problems, and ensure that contingents receive the support or remedial training required. The critical role of the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership in supporting field performance should be reinforced.

98. Every contributor must communicate, during negotiations over possible deployment, national caveats regarding the use of military or police contingents. The decision process in selecting forces for peace operations will take those caveats into account, including whether to proceed with deployment. Additional caveats beyond those explicitly agreed by the Secretariat cannot be accepted after deployment. I have instructed all missions to communicate to Headquarters any incidents of refusal to follow orders given by the Force Commander or the Police Commissioner, whether on grounds of new national caveats or others. The Secretariat will immediately inform the concerned Member State and, on a regular basis, the Security Council and, where no remedial action is forthcoming, will repatriate the unit concerned.

Training

99. The complexities of today's operations require a collective effort to enhance the training of uniformed personnel for United Nations peace operations. The limited time available for predeployment training must be maximized to increase readiness and familiarity with United Nations standards and requirements. I am taking forward three interlinked initiatives to enhance predeployment training, set out below, and encourage Member States to support them.

100. First, as from January 2016, I will request Member States to provide certification for all uniformed personnel who have completed United Nations-specified predeployment training as part of force and police generation processes. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are strengthening their mobile training teams to provide targeted support to interested Member States in meeting that requirement.

101. Second, I have requested the two Departments to support the establishment of bilateral and regional training partnerships. That capacity would act as a hub to match Member States' training capacity to needs, particularly in support of new and emerging troop and police contributors.

102. Third, I intend to establish a pilot train-the-trainer centre, supported by voluntary contributions, for uniformed personnel. The centre will reinforce the role of the United Nations in setting training standards and allow for earlier and more

consistent engagement with Member States in the preparation of uniformed personnel.

F. Safety and security

103. The deterioration of the global security environment has increased the complexity and the scale of security challenges for United Nations peace operations. The United Nations is a direct target for attack by some parties that do not view the Organization as an impartial entity or that consider its presence as an impediment to their objectives. The threat is aggravated, in certain contexts, by blurred lines between criminal and extremist groups and competition between them. Intense conflict has also increased the risk of indirect attacks against peace operations personnel. That threat environment will not improve significantly in the short term. Our focus must be on increasing the capability of the United Nations system to "stay and deliver" while ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

104. The increasing use of armoured vehicles and technology, improved communications, information gathering and analysis, training and quality medical care, as well as guard units, are some of the most effective ways to keep our personnel safe, and I will continue to pursue advances across all of those fronts.

105. To better integrate security efforts, I am taking forward the consolidation of all Secretariat security resources under the Department of Safety and Security, in line with General Assembly resolution 59/276, which will improve our ability to analyse threats and risks and deploy personnel according to field needs and priorities. Implementation of that ambitious initiative will begin early in 2016. It will be bolstered by the roll-out at the end of 2015 of a new security risk management policy and process that incorporates enhanced security threat assessment and management tools. Demand for regional analysis is being addressed through additional security analysts, the deployment of physical security specialists to regional offices, and increased surge support from Headquarters.

106. The new tools, together with enhanced implementation of the programme criticality framework, will support managers in making informed and time-sensitive decisions in high-risk environments as to which activities to undertake and how to manage risks to personnel. Gender-specific risk considerations are currently being developed to ensure that the security needs of female staff are met. A system-wide crisis management policy and department-specific operating procedures will be finalized to enable effective and coherent responses.

107. I strongly believe that the adoption of widely available and cost-effective technologies can make huge strides towards improving the safety and security of United Nations personnel and assets, as well as our capacity to protect civilians and to implement mandates effectively. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have put in place a strategy to implement the key recommendations of the recent Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in United Nations Peacekeeping, and I look forward to progress in that regard.

108. Information management tools to improve data collection and recording of security incidents are one example of the benefits of technology. Those tools will be fully operational in selected missions by the end of 2015 and will help in

determining proactive security responses. They will also strengthen the Organization's capacity to systematically follow up with host Governments on their responsibility to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of crimes against United Nations personnel. I urge host States to cooperate in that regard. Furthermore, I have instructed the Department of Management, in coordination with the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre and other entities, to take responsibility for the consolidated management of information regarding fatalities to ensure that administrative processes, including facilitating support to next of kin, are appropriately and consistently handled. The Panel has called for rates of compensation for death and disability to be given due consideration by the General Assembly, and I encourage Member States to do so.

109. Member States deploying uniformed personnel to peace operations also bear responsibility for ensuring that military and police operating in high-risk environments have the tactics, techniques and procedures necessary to do so effectively. The United Nations can and does provide on-demand specialized training and guidance, for example to manage risks of improvised explosive devices. However, it is up to Member States to ensure that blue helmets have the training required to operate in conflict, and lives are needlessly lost when that is not the case.

Medical standards and capabilities

110. Good medical and health care saves lives. Today's peace operations urgently require medical capabilities that can meet emergency and trauma care needs. The new edition of the Medical Support Manual, which will be issued shortly, sets out revised international standards for casualty response required in all field missions. In addition, I initiated the establishment of a medical performance framework for United Nations peace operations. This will focus initially on level II hospitals, United Nations-operated level I clinics and aero-medical evacuation teams and will be progressively expanded to include all field health-care capabilities, both civilian and military. In cooperation with interested Member States, the project will define and set standards for the performance of care, the processes governing field hospitals and clinics, and ways in which emergency and trauma health care is delivered in the field. The results of the project will be fed into the meeting of the Working Group on Reimbursement of Contingent-Owned Equipment to be held in 2017.

111. I share contributors' concerns at the challenges experienced by some missions in consistently responding to medical emergencies and in evacuating casualties. I requested the Department of Field Support, as a matter of priority, to review its aviation and casualty evacuation guidelines and internal procedures to ensure that missions can meet international standards of casualty evacuation. This will require a collective effort. Missions must improve their coordination processes and mechanisms to be able to respond quickly and predictably to casualties. Contributing countries must ensure that their troops are trained to perform emergency trauma care and that their level I clinics are capable of stabilizing casualties. Host States must support requests for medical and casualty evacuation support, including air space access. The Department is addressing, on a mission-by-mission basis, current impediments to night flight operations for purposes of casualty evacuation. In some missions, the composition of air fleets and medical

facilities may need to be revisited to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet emergency requirements in addition to more routine tasks.

G. Leadership and accountability

Leadership

112. I am mindful of the immense responsibility that rests on leaders of United Nations peace operations. I welcome the Panel's emphasis on the importance of selecting the right leaders and ensuring that they have the support necessary to provide political direction and executive management of often large and complex operations.

113. I will continue to appoint mission leaders on the basis of merit and the specific requirements of each situation, which will be reflected in tailored post profiles and competencies. They will include political acumen, mediation expertise, regional knowledge, management skills and linguistic capabilities. Candidates for mission leadership positions should also be assessed for their human rights commitment. The outreach mechanisms and predictable assessment and recruitment procedures that I have introduced over the past eight years have gone some way in strengthening leadership appointments and include efforts to attract the best force commanders and police commissioners. I encourage Member States to support those efforts.

114. Improving the representation of women in senior leadership has been a long-standing priority of mine. Gender diversity in leadership teams brings important perspectives and enables missions to engage a broader section of the population. Currently 23 per cent of heads of mission and 17 per cent of deputy heads of mission are female. I encourage Member States to share profiles of qualified women candidates for consideration as part of a global response to bring women to the fore.

115. Heads of peace operations need to be assisted by leadership teams with relevant experience and skills, particularly in United Nations policies and administrative systems. Leaders need to be able to draw on and work as part of a mutually reinforcing management team that includes deputies, chiefs of staff, mission support and individual components. I recognize that establishing and maintaining leadership teams with complementary competencies is a challenge. I have instructed my staff to develop leadership team profiles and competencies to provide criteria against which the rotating recruitment and selection of individual senior managers can be considered. My special representatives will also be consulted on senior appointments to their teams.

116. The leadership of the United Nations country team is an important component of any such team. In non-mission settings, where the Resident Coordinator leads the country's team's approach to a crisis, it is particularly critical. I welcome the attention given by the Panel and the peacebuilding review to the importance of that post. A rigorous assessment process already exists to identify prospective resident coordinators, and I intend to further strengthen procedures to assess the ability of candidates to operate in politically sensitive and crisis environments.

117. I will strengthen comprehensive leadership training for incoming senior mission leaders using both United Nations System Staff College and Headquarters resources. A voluntary mentoring programme is currently being piloted to provide

follow-up support after deployment; pending results and available resources, it could be made mandatory.

118. Performance management is another way of strengthening support provided to senior leaders. I am refining the senior manager compact for heads of mission to better reflect their multiple responsibilities, including directing mission-wide strategies and mainstreaming gender. Performance assessment tools are also being revised to ensure feedback on performance, as well as to strengthen interaction between field and Headquarters leadership. The results of such assessments will have an impact on decisions regarding appointment renewal.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

119. I have made it abundantly clear that the United Nations prohibits sexual exploitation and abuse. I am grateful for the endorsement by the General Assembly of the steps outlined in my most recent report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779) to further implement zero tolerance, and measures are already under way to put them in place. Most peace operations have already set up standing task forces on sexual exploitation and abuse. By the end of 2015 immediate response teams will be set up to gather and preserve evidence within 72 hours of receipt of an allegation. I have informed field operations and Member States that investigations of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations must be concluded within six months. Better follow-up and investigation requires Member State cooperation, and I urge troop-contributing countries to embed national investigation officers in their contingents.

120. I have clearly communicated my intent to impose strong sanctions against those who commit acts of misconduct and those who fail to take action against them, including mission leadership and command authorities. I have strengthened administrative sanctions against United Nations staff members found to have committed sexual exploitation and abuse, including placing them on administrative leave without pay pending completion of investigations. I have begun suspending payments where there are credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse implicating individual contingents or police personnel. I will repatriate contingents where there is a demonstrated pattern of abuse or non-response to allegations of misconduct and, as previously reported, consider terminating the deployment of uniformed personnel where there is a documented pattern of non-compliance with United Nations standards of conduct. I urge Member States to hold courts martial in host countries as a measure of visible accountability.

121. Detailed guidance to missions on standards and procedures for alerting United Nations Headquarters to instances of criminal misconduct by civilian, military or police personnel will be disseminated to missions early in 2016. Such cases will be referred to judicial authorities of host countries and, where relevant, the contributing country, for pursuit of criminal accountability under national law. Genuine accountability, however, rests on the cooperation of Member States. I urge Member States to demonstrate their commitment to ridding the United Nations of the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse by concluding their discussions, pending since 2006, on a proposed international convention to ensure accountability of United Nations personnel in connection with crimes committed in peacekeeping operations. Continued failure to do so sends a terrible signal to the world.

122. I will continue to bring public light to misconduct. I have committed to publicly disclosing the nationality of personnel contributed by Member States being investigated for sexual exploitation and abuse and, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/307, will consult Member States on the reporting methodology that I am putting in place for that purpose. I have requested that issues of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, be added to the agenda of meetings of the Council to highlight developments on sexual exploitation and abuse. I have also proposed that the issue be placed on the agenda of meetings of the Council with troop and police contributors and that the Council review follow-up action on all reported cases. I urge the Council to take those initiatives forward.

123. We must reach out to affected communities and other partners. Missions have been instructed to put in place, by the second quarter of 2016, a framework to provide community-based mechanisms where people can more readily come forward to raise complaints regarding United Nations personnel. The creation of an adequately resourced victim assistance programme is under way with the development of terms of reference for a trust fund to support awareness-raising and community outreach and support to identified providers of services to victims. I shall report on its progress in my next report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

124. Strengthened sexual exploitation and abuse prevention requires constant awareness-raising and training. The development of a mandatory e-learning programme on sexual exploitation and abuse for all field personnel is in progress, and a pilot will be rolled out in May 2016. I am expanding the vetting of civilian personnel to ensure that they do not have a history of sexual misconduct during prior service in the United Nations. Specific means for vetting military contingent and formed police unit personnel will be developed by the end of 2015.

125. I share the Panel's assessment that United Nations peace operations must immediately inform relevant Governments and regional organizations of allegations of human rights violations and sexual exploitation and abuse by non-United Nations forces. I await the findings of the independent review panel on the United Nations response to allegations of sexual abuse by foreign military forces in the Central African Republic, on the basis of which I will establish procedures for external engagement with parallel presences and a dedicated system-wide lead to drive forward zero tolerance.

Human rights standards

126. Since 2011, policies that require human rights screening of all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel, as well as human rights due diligence for the provision of United Nations operational or training support to non-United Nations security forces, have been in place. I have tasked relevant United Nations entities with ensuring the systematic application of those policies. I call upon Member States to ensure the nomination and deployment of military and police personnel who meet United Nations standards as part of force generation and rehatting processes. I also call upon Member States, when their security forces receive United Nations operational or training support, to provide up-to-date relevant information to inform United Nations risk assessments under the due diligence policy.

127. State parties repeatedly listed in my annual reports on children and armed conflict and on conflict-related sexual violence will henceforth not be accepted for

participation in United Nations peace operations. I have requested those troop and police contributors that are currently listed to engage with my respective Special Representatives in order to be delisted, by making and implementing specific time-bound commitments and concrete action plans to address violations for which they are listed. Failure to cease systematic violations and implement action plans expeditiously will result in their suspension from peace operations.

Environmental awareness

128. The environment has been one of my priorities as Secretary-General, and I am fully committed to ensuring that United Nations peace operations are a sustainable presence. A review of my 2009 environmental policy for United Nations field missions will be completed early in 2016 and will include measures to improve the health and safety of mission personnel and local populations while reducing harmful environmental impact from mission activities. It will be complemented by a new waste management policy for missions.

129. I also welcome the Panel's recommendation that environmental impact assessments be carried out as part of the assessment and planning of new missions and regularly during the mission's lifetime. I have requested the United Nations Environment Programme to provide support in establishing environmental baselines and monitoring benchmarks in peace operations. Some field missions have dedicated environmental units to develop and implement mission-specific environmental policies and oversee environmental compliance, although significant challenges remain.

V. Conclusions: a call for change

130. I approach my final year as Secretary-General with profound concern over the many challenges facing us. The scale and complexity of conflict today and the suffering that it creates threaten the international order established 70 years ago. We urgently need new and stronger ways to address international peace and security challenges. We must harness the full range of tools available: political, security, development, human rights and humanitarian, and we need to change the way in which we do business within and across that range.

131. The present report sets out how United Nations peace operations, when designed and conducted in more people-focused and targeted ways, can contribute to this global effort. It sets an agenda for action that reflects what I as Secretary-General can do to advance earlier, more tailored and more effective United Nations prevention and conflict responses. It provides a balanced and prioritized set of reforms to address the most urgent challenges facing peace operations today, while offering a basis for more long-term transformation. With smart and targeted investments in critical areas, substantial improvements can be achieved.

132. However, United Nations peace operations are only one of the tools that we urgently need. Without focused commitment on the part of Member States, the whole United Nations system, regional partners and other organizations to advancing and consolidating peace, today's conflicts will rage into tomorrow, and yesterday's conflicts will violently return. Peace operations are a collective tool. They are a vital part of a global commitment to preventing and resolving conflict, protecting civilians and sustaining peace. Adapting them requires a system-wide

effort and the active engagement and support of the entire membership. I urge Member States to join me in this endeavour.

133. I recognize that it is no easy task. The global political and economic environment is perilously stretched. Resources are limited and the demands are many. Scepticism runs high. Yet those who gathered 70 years ago to create the United Nations also confronted a divided and distraught world. Those strains reinforced countries' determination to invest in international peace and security. They understood that there is simply no alternative: we must, together, renew our resolve to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".